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Cook, Ellen A.

GOD'S WORLD

(VOL. I)

A Treatise on Spiritualism Founded on Transcripts
of Shorthand Notes taken down, over a period
of five years, in the Seance-room of

The William T. Stead Memorial Center

(A Religious Body Incorporated Under the Statutes
of the State of Illinois)

Mrs. Cecil M. Cook

MEDIUM AND PASTOR

COMPILED AND WRITTEN BY
Lloyd Kenyon Jones

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THE LIFEWORK OF MR. WILLIAM T. STEAD

We of the earth-world are accustomed to speak and write about a person who has passed through the change called death as belonging to the past. We refer to what a man's work was. Spiritualism recognizes in dissolution merely a change of conditions, without any alteration in the fact of life, without any break in its continuity, and free from any change of personality.

The world in general would refer to Mr. Stead as having been born July 5, 1849 and as having died with the sinking of the Titanic, April 15, 1912.

Ordinarily, when a religious body adopts the name of some great person, and particularly in the light of a memorial, the assumption is that the adoption is a tribute to a great person who lived once and who lives no more. The style and title of our corporation—"The William T. Stead Memorial Center"—has no such mortuary suggestion of any limitation of Mr. Stead's Life. To us, he lives exactly the same as he did live in the earth-world. We do not even think of him as living in some other world, because it all is one world and life is all one great life.

During his mortal career, Mr. Stead made a reputation that extended throughout the world. He was always a public figure. As an author and editor, Mr. Stead contributed materially to the world's literature and particularly to matters of international moment. He wrote and published numerous books, foremost among which we would place "Letters from Julia," which he received through automatic writings from Miss Julia Ames, then in spirit. He was the founder of "Julia's Bureau" located in London, the purpose of which was to provide consolation for bereaved persons and means of communication between them and their spirit-friends.

As editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Review of Reviews*, meaning not only the English edition but the American edition as well, Mr. Stead made his personality and his views felt in all parts of the world.

In 1885, Mr. Stead received a singular endorsement at the hands of a British jurist who sentenced him to three months' imprisonment for his stand on the white slave traffic. While he was in jail, Mr. Stead edited his *Pall Mall Gazette*. It soon became evident to the British authorities that instead of punishing Mr. Stead, they were giving him the widest publicity he possibly could receive. His fame was assured from that moment forward.

Without attempting to touch upon the many details of Mr. Stead's busy earth-life, without seeking to give a chronology or an index of his books and works, we shall pass to that dramatic event that occurred in the early hours of April 15, 1912.

Mr. Stead had taken passage on the S. S. Titanic that left Southampton Easter week, bound for New York, where he was to address the Men and Religious Congress on the subject of "Universal Peace." The sinking of that mighty steamer resulted in the loss of about sixteen hundred persons. If we were writing a chronicle of the earth doings of Mr. Stead, we should feel obliged to close our statements about him with his passing from earth-life.

It had been the purpose of Mr. Stead, while he was in America, to visit Mrs. Cecil M. Cook, who had a world-wide reputation as a Spiritualistic medium, and to induce her, if possible, to return with him to London to assist him in the conduct of "Julia's Bureau," at least for a time.

The Titanic went to the bottom of the ocean on the 15th of April, 1912, and on the 18th of April, 1912, Mr. Stead appeared to Mrs. Cook in her seance-room, and since that time has been the spiritual director of the work of The William T. Stead Memorial Center.

To illustrate the truth that there is no break in life in passing from the flesh into spirit, we shall cite one incident that should prove of interest to every reader of this volume.

Into the seance-room, one Sunday evening, along with many other persons, came a man unknown to any of the others present at the seance. Shortly after the room was darkened and the meeting had begun, Mr. Stead came in and immediately greeted this stranger, calling him by name and saying, "When last we met in London, neither of us thought that our next meeting would be like this." This man had been a friend of Mr. Stead, and hearing of the Stead Center, he had come to see if his old friend would greet him. He was not disappointed.

This is only one of numerous instances of that nature.

While those in spirit do not care to talk about their hour of passing through the change of death, Mr. Stead gave us, on one occasion, a very accurate description of what occurred and of his own sensations when he realized that his earth-lease had expired. We present this with the hope that it will not appeal simply to the morbidly curious who have made a great fetish of death. We trust that it will help shed some light on the most important subject in the world, which is the subject of immortality. Not having taken a shorthand record of Mr. Stead's description, we make no attempt to quote him, but merely recite the facts in accordance with our memory of his description.

Mr. Stead told us about the foggy night and the great speed of the Titanic, which was being urged to its utmost in order to establish a new record for its owners. This, of course, was in accordance with the maiden trips of other great ships. But in the early Spring of 1912, many icebergs had appeared in the North Atlantic. The officers of the ship felt that they were too far south to be in danger, nor did any one on the boat feel any particular alarm when its bow crumpled against a mountain of ice in midocean.

Man has great faith in the works of man. If he had proportionate faith in the works of God, he would escape all of his trials and tribulations, his doubts and his fears. The Titanic was regarded as a ship that could not be sunk. For the sake of safety, women and children were lowered in the lifeboats, and those left aboard the vessel experienced no considerable alarm

and expected to be able to keep afloat until succor arrived. Suddenly the ship listed heavily. Her gigantic beams of steel creaked, groaned and snapped. The fate of the Titanic was sealed.

Mr. Stead realized at that moment, as probably all of the others aboard the Titanic realized, that the mighty vessel was doomed to almost immediate destruction. He made his way the best he could to his stateroom. In those few remaining moments, he pondered the question of life and death. His years of belief as a Spiritualist, his utmost faith in the continuity of life, stilled his fears. And yet, when it comes to the passing, most mortals dread the agony and the uncertainty of death.

With all of the odds of fate against him—with full realization that he soon would be trapped and drowned—Mr. Stead asked his guides in spirit to relieve him of the torments of drowning. He tells us that he never felt the water touch his body. He says that the passing, which meant the taking of the spirit from the normal, healthy, physical-body that had not yet met injury, required not to exceed five seconds. He was standing on the surface of the Atlantic. Around and about him very soon gathered others newly released from the flesh. In the icy waters, hundreds of men and women were still struggling. One by one, they ceased their struggles and joined that multitude on the bosom of the water. To them, it was no longer night—it was perfect day. Soon hosts from the spirit-world began to arrive—friends who had long departed, came to greet the newly arrived friends. Dear ones met dear ones. There was all the warmth and joy of recognition and love. Every personality was the same, and every person looked the same. Mr. Stead, as well as others on that ship, was prepared for the change. They knew that immortality was a fact and they were neither surprised nor shocked to find that their faith had been substantiated.

We say that we can think of Mr. Stead not as a man who lived and died, but as a man who continues to live. We talk with him and we find he is the same polished, gentlemanly scholar that he was on earth. Long before he reached the

cross-roads where the two phases of life meet, he had consecrated his life to humanity and to God. That consecration was not for the brief span of mortal existence—it was for eternity.

Mr. Stead is the directing head of the organization that bears his name, and through his ceaseless kindness and ministering efforts, many have been led to a new understanding of life. They have discovered that the term religion no longer means something mawkish or hysterical or belonging to the tomb. They have learned through Mr. Stead's teachings what life implies. They have been taught its responsibilities. And now the work of Mr. William T. Stead, that at best was only arrested temporarily by the sinking of the Titanic, is once more able to reach mankind. Since his coming to the Center, the Teachings have been received and upon the foundation of those Teachings, this volume is based.

MRS. CECIL M. COOK

As this volume will reveal, communication from the spirit-world depends upon mediumship. And just as there are artists of different degrees, ability and development, so is there an almost endless variety of mediums.

The majority of volumes that have been written about Spiritualism have been founded on the phenomena, manifestations and communications received through poorly developed or indifferent mediums. Some of the most widely-read books have concerned themselves chiefly with those forms of mediumship which manifest themselves largely through the production of physical results. An estimate of mediumship should be decided by the nature of the communications that are received. A partially-developed medium would attract to her circle the spirits that belonged to her own plane of development, and if other spirits attempted to communicate through her mediumship, they would encounter conditions not to their liking and these poor conditions would constitute obstacles which would obstruct, curtail and clog the messages.

At the time this volume is written (1918), Mrs. Cecil M. Cook has been doing public work as a direct-voice medium for a period of seventeen years. But from babyhood, she has heard the voices and seen the discarnate spirits as clearly as other mortals see fellow-beings of this world. Mrs. Cook can be said to live in two worlds at once. Very often in a room where we would see only five persons, she might see twenty-five, and those in spirit would have the same solidity in her vision that we would have. A spirit might be seated in a chair. She would not look through the spirit-form and see the chair. It would be identical with the presence of a flesh-and-blood being.

As a baby, Mrs. Cook heard the voices. She did not know what they meant. In her home, which was on her father's farm, there was a room in which the pipe-hole of a chimney

had been left open, and through this opening the voices came, calling her by name and telling her things that she could understand. She would convey the information she had received to her parents, and for her trouble she was often reprimanded severely.

At one time on her father's farm, while she was still a very small child, she started to climb up a pile of loose rocks to pluck a berry from a vine that had rambled over the stones. Just as she was about to stoop to gather the berry, a voice spoke to her and said: "Now be careful. Don't move, but look down at your feet." She heeded the warning and there, on a flat rock, enjoying the warmth of the sun, lay a copperhead snake. Similar warnings come to her frequently, not only concerning herself and her family, but also her friends and oftentimes strangers.

During Mrs. Cook's earlier years as a public medium, she submitted to endless tests imposed upon her by professional investigators, to which class we duly pay our respects in this volume. These investigators imposed what they termed "test conditions" that have been so highly endorsed by scientists who seek to name their own law for the spirit-world. A cage was constructed and she would be placed in it and bound. And yet in the darkened room, the voices would come just the same, some of them as clear as any mortal voice speaking in an ordinary tone. The other voices talked through the trumpet, made of light metal or fibre, the purpose of which is to intensify the voice. Others would sing as clearly and with as much volume as any vocalist in a church. There would be solos and duets and entire choirs. Other tests imposed upon Mrs. Cook included filling her hands and her mouth with flour during the progress of a seance, so that it would be manifestly impossible to speak or use her hands without giving tangible evidence. After the seance was over and the lights were turned on, the flour was in her hands and in her mouth exactly as it had been placed.

After several years of these meaningless and ignorant tests, Mrs. Cook realized that the professional investigator is much

like a man who is lost in a forest and who travels only in a circle until he drops from exhaustion. She discovered through experience that her gift of mediumship was not intended simply to satisfy a band of skeptics who would add nothing to the cause of Spiritualism or to the truth of immortality, but it was to put bereaved persons into communication with those whom they had loved in this world. This work has occupied practically all of this medium's time.

Many of the most noted men and women in the world have sat in her seance-room. These persons have been of nearly every nationality, and they have conversed with their spirit-friends in their native tongues.

Around and about Mrs. Cook there quite naturally came into existence a circle of friends whose interest went beyond the mere fact of communication, and who were ready to receive the Teachings of the more highly developed spirits who could come through the forces of this medium. And therein lies the real test of mediumship. Communication is one thing, but the Teachings are something else. Through clean, honest, upright living, through her relentless devotion to the spirit-world, it has been possible for Mrs. Cook's guides to so make use of her forces that highly developed members of the spirit-world—those with long experience on the farther side of the earth's shadows—could come unhampered and bring their lessons for the good of the mortal kind.

Mrs. Cook's circle guides, Snowdrop and Pat, and her principal controls, Bright Face and Pink Rose, are known intimately to many thousands of Spiritualists throughout the world. But these thousands are not familiar with the teachers. That privilege has been reserved for the small classes who have preserved perfect records of the Teachings. Inasmuch as this detailed information has never been given through any other medium in the world, or at least has never been committed to writing, we feel free in our contentions that Mrs. Cecil M. Cook is the most highly-developed medium in the world. A careful and prolonged study of the Teachings that have come to mortals through her mediumship, will help to decide that question.

THE TEACHINGS

This book, Vol. I of "God's World," is based upon the Teachings that were received during a period of about five years in the seance-room of The William T. Stead Memorial Center, Chicago, Illinois, Mrs. Cecil M. Cook, Medium and Pastor.

The classes at which these Teachings were recorded in short-hand, as given by the direct voices of the teachers in spirit, were held about one month apart during this five-year period. The transcript of the Teachings was preserved carefully, and this book has been compiled and written in faithful observance of those transcripts, without the introduction of any mortal views. The reason these lessons were not published in the original transcript form was because, at different intervals, additions would be made to the various subjects covered in this work. In the compilation of this book, all of these Teachings have been grouped and so far as practicable repetitions have been avoided.

We have presented these subjects in the order in which the spirit-world has advocated that they appear. Unlike most volumes on the subject of Spiritualism, this book is intended not simply to be read. Any one of the subjects could well be utilized as the foundation for an entire volume. Consequently, many good points are presented with considerable brevity. But where it is essential to impress the exact meaning upon the reader, these statements are supplemented by illustrations, and these illustrations—illuminating statements of fact—are distinctive in the Teachings.

Naturally, these subjects are all closely related. And in the different parts of the book, it is often necessary to make specific reference to truths that also are covered in other parts. But this is done where those facts have special reference to the subject being treated.

Each paragraph or group of paragraphs, as conditions dictate, under every part, beginning with Part I, is numbered, these numbers running in numerical order to the end of the part and beginning with No. 1 as the next part is introduced. In the back of this work will be found an index. This index is divided according to the subjects. Every paragraph or group of paragraphs in this book is accounted for in that index, and this cross-indexing has been done for the special benefit of the student. By referring alphabetically to any subject touched upon in this work, the index will reveal the paragraph numbers and page numbers, where will be found every reference to this particular subject. In this manner, the student may compile such notes as he desires and place in order, for his own thought and meditation, such finer subdivisions as may appeal to him as having particular interest.

The fore part of this work is devoted to explanations of those features of Spiritualism that undoubtedly will prove of prime interest to the person who wishes to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the subject. The Teachings come later. Those persons who have shown an interest in Spiritualism, will be delighted to learn that the messages coming from the spirit-side of life are not limited to the greetings of friends or the expression of love, great as these sentiments may be. This volume goes into the deeper problems of life. The Teachings bring to the mortal-world the truths that are observed and understood by those who live in the freer and brighter state of existence, and therefore much nearer God's law and an understanding of the things eternal.

As we become acquainted with the Teachings of the spirit-world, and when we bear in mind that these Teachings were given in voices as clear and distinct as the voices of mortal men and women, we may feel without question that the most interesting subject in life is Life.

We recommend to every purchaser of this book that, inasmuch as he or she will find continuous revelations, though the volume may be studied for years, it be retained as a personal

possession. Borrowers might ask for it for the sake of curiosity, but the purpose of this work is intended not to satisfy the curious. Its purpose is to teach those who wish to learn the lessons that come from the spirit-side of life to those in God's cradle-world—the flesh-and-blood, mortal earth.

PART I

IMMORTALITY

No subject has ever been, or could ever be, more interesting than the subject of Life.

1

Does life continue beyond the grave? If it continues, is there the same individuality that there was on earth? Who can prove it?

The doubter says that the life of a person is like the growth, budding and blossoming of a flower. And he says that death is like the withering of that beautiful bloom. And in drawing this comparison, he is more nearly correct than he surmises. The life-principle in the flower is no more destroyed with the withering of that plant than is the life-principle in a human being snuffed out when that person's eyes close in death.

2

There is no death.

There are no dead.

Argument can not prove immortality. The rules of common sense can point out countless reasons why life persists after the change. But when the heart speaks, then the thought processes of the brain become secondary. The heart yearns for immortality. The logician very often calls this sentimentality or hysteria. But when Death touches his home and deprives him of a loved one, all of his logic can not fill or satisfy the longing of his heart. All of his cold, hard-hearted argument can not appease the hunger of his soul.

3

But the fact remains that opinion has never changed Natural Law. If all the population of the earth voted to discontinue the law of gravitation, the apple would drop to the earth after the election the same as other apples have fallen from trees for ages. If all of the great scientists of the earth met in

4

convention and issued a proclamation that they would put the germinating power into an artificial seed and make it grow, the seed would not germinate. It would not bring forth more of its kind.

- 5 The sun will shed its rays upon the earth tomorrow the same as it did today and yesterday. Man can observe, but in his observations he may commit errors. But even when his observations are correct and can be proved beyond question, what change has that opinion made relative to Natural Law?
- 6 There is within all normal mortals a certain degree of faith. That faith may not manifest itself in the general course of events. It may require a crisis to unveil it.
- 7 We are living under God's law. We came into life in accordance with that law, and in harmony with it we shall depart from this life. But that does not make us less important than the material things around and about us. They are never lost. They may change—they may enter into new combinations—but down to the finest division of matter nothing is ever lost.
- 8 Nothing that man has ever created has ever approached Life in beauty or importance. Life and Nature are related. Everything that exists is related, because it all emanates from God—it is all part of Creation.
- 9 Let those who doubt return from the burial ground where they have left the mortal remains of some loved one. Do their science and logic satisfy them? Are they content in the knowledge that they have seemed to disprove immortality by arguments that they have advanced? Have they answered away the love, the individuality and those little touches of personality of their loved ones, by bringing up arguments of evolution and chemical reaction?
- 10 Man observes the phenomena of Life. If he would study the light of a candle diligently, he would learn the phenomena of many branches of Natural Law. If he would master the mystery of why a kernel of wheat will grow, then he would

be in much better position to say that he understood the Law of God. But none of these things can he answer. He merely observes, and he does not observe correctly at all times.

A half-truth may be more dangerous than ignorance. Unless one can know a thing in its entirety, one may not know that thing at all. Can we know Life in its entirety? Can we know Nature in its entirety? Have we that magnificent grasp of intellect that permits us, in this stage of life, to know Nature or Life?

The mightiest and lowliest of the earth must always appreciate the truth that the time will come when they must die. They must pass through that transition known as Death. They can not foretell, except in rare instances, the hour and manner of their going. To mortals, death is inevitable. Birth is the A and death is the Z in Life's Alphabet, and without all of the letters of that alphabet, there can not be the vocabulary or the understanding of the processes of life.

As surely as there is a beginning to earth existence, there must be an end. Around and about us, we behold a universe with a beginning so remote we can not comprehend it. We behold a universe that we do not know can ever have any ending. This universe was created not by a different God from the one who created mankind. The same Power that brought into existence the planets, also made the tiniest grain of sand and every mortal—everything that has life and everything we call inanimate.

But even to comprehend all these truths, can not prove immortality.

We are creatures of habit. Sometimes we accept our religion or our atheism just as we would fall into the habit of exercising before breakfast or of praying before we go to bed. Where the belief of immortality is a habit, it proves nothing. It has little significance. If you believe in immortality merely because your parents told you it was so, then perhaps you have never exercised your own Godly instincts; likely you have never called on the inner voice of your own soul.

- 15 In you truth abides. If you have not found it, it is only because you have closed the door against it. You have not destroyed it. Nor can you destroy life. You can change its state of being.
- 16 If you have been told from the lecture platform, or from books, that death ends all, the best you can say for your position is that you have fallen into the habit of accepting certain statements as being true. If you meet a man who has come from a far country and he describes things that are new to you, you may even doubt him. But after a time you meet another man from that same country, and while his opinions about that place may differ from the opinions of the first man, they are both agreed as to the main facts. If you meet a person who has lived for many years in a city that you have not visited, and he brings you tidings and descriptions of that city, it is possible that they may not agree with the conceptions that you have formed of that place. Are you in position to tell that man he is wrong? Is it reasonable to believe that you know more about his home than he knows about it?
- 17 Bear that statement in mind. Remember that if there is immortality, it is reasonable to believe that God has left the door open—that He has provided means in every generation for the proof of that fact.
- 18 There are many persons who argue against the possibility of life beyond the grave, and argue persistently, because they doubt and they wish to convince themselves that their theories are correct. There are many people who argue against immortality because they are supreme egotists. We meet people every day who will cling to a falsehood or an error, because they have advanced it as a belief and refuse to admit that they are wrong. Around and about them at every turn, they encounter things they do not understand. They have not comprehended the simplest truths of Nature. They do not know why one kind of seed invariably produces a certain grain or a tree or a fruit, and never varies from that faithful reproduction. They know little about the air they breathe

or about the earth upon which they walk. Their knowledge is limited.

There are millions of people in the world who know facts about which those other persons have never even guessed. These atheists and agnostics have not risen to the heights of the standard of human knowledge. There are far brighter persons than they. And yet they are ready to sweep aside the superiority that rises above them among their fellows, and they are ready to judge God and decide what His laws shall be.

And in the minds of others there is fear of immortality. This dates back from the deep-seated error that God is a vengeful God. They are afraid to inquire about life beyond the grave, because they are afraid of God. The life that they have was given to them only by God. Everything they see and enjoy is part of God's creation. And yet in their ignorance, they are afraid to admit that perhaps God created conditions and states of being beyond their present comprehension. They eat food and they never solve the exact reasons why their digestive organs will extract certain parts of that food from the main bulk and replace cells in the body. Each night they lie down to sleep and pass into a state of unconsciousness, content in the knowledge that they will awake on the morrow. Every moment they live, they are in the hands of God. And yet when it comes to asking questions about other phases and other conditions in God's creation, they are afraid.

Whatever is possible must be in accordance with Natural Law. In ages to come the inhabitants of the world will find it difficult to believe that many of our greatest inventions were frowned upon by people who claimed to have religious convictions. When anaesthetics were first introduced, some ministers of the gospel preached from their pulpits against the use of them. They called it the work of the devil. They said that people suffered because God wanted them to suffer. And in the sermons from countless pulpits for countless ages, there has persisted this doctrine of the fear of God. And as man fears God, he distrusts his fellow-mortals. We have

heard of the doctrine of the devil from time immemorial. And if we learn to look upon evil as the paramount thing, then we must give it parity with God. We must admit then that the devil is as great as God. We must take from God His supremacy. But what mortal has ever had the right to analyze and classify and restrict the Creator? How can any man who is brought face to face with facts and conditions beyond his comprehension, no matter where he may turn, attempt to judge the Creator of all things?

22 If we start out in quest of proof of immortality, we can do so only by first having confidence in the Power that gives life. If we see aught but love in the works of God, then we have not measured up to the common standard that makes us ready and willing to inquire into those things that can come to us only through Natural Law. We can not look long without seeing God. We can not think legitimately of anything material or any force or energy in the universe without thinking of God. Then how can we concern ourselves with the facts and conditions of life, without beginning with the belief that God is all-in-all and that He has known what He is about, without realizing that His plan does not need our puny suggestions in order to perfect it?

23 Fear has hemmed in and bound down the world until the world must react against fear. The atheist and the agnostic who have talked against immortality have at least helped weed out the garden. They have taken from that garden the stones and the tares, so that the beautiful flowers shall grow. But no doubter and no atheist could ever take out of the heart that which God placed in the heart. Sometimes only when superstition has been torn out by the roots, is it possible for the real seed of truth to grow. And sometimes the atheist and the agnostic have accomplished far more than the missionary, because the doubter has taken away only those things that were harmful. He had no power to rob any individual of that which was of God. On the other hand, the missionary has often instilled in the minds of simple and happy people new fears and new superstitions. The missionary has some-

times brought fear where there was no fear. Which has done the greater harm?

The person who seeks proof of immortality, begins first of all by accepting two facts: He believes in the Love of God. That he can not question or he must be beset by fear and misgivings. Second, he must admit that there are many things he does not understand. The person whose egotism tells him that he knows all, and that through that knowledge he is superior, is not in a frame of mind to admit that there is a truth in the universe that has escaped his attention or comprehension.

In the membership of the different denominations, there are many persons who need no proof of immortality. Outside of the membership of churches, there are millions of others who ask no proof of immortality. When religion of any kind brings comfort and faith to any heart, that heart need not seek further. He who looks for evidence of immortality, has wandered from his path if he begins by saying that everybody else is wrong and that he alone is right.

We of the earth-world are appealed to in many different ways. Our tastes differ. Our understanding differs. We see facts from a great variety of angles. A member of a church sees the truth from his own viewpoint. That does not make him wrong. If the creed he has adopted satisfies him, then that creed is reaching his heart.

There has never been any evidence that God has ever condemned any mortal because he differs in faith from other mortals. The true spiritualist does not go to the member of any church or organization and tell him that he is wrong. Those who have talked with their friends who have passed through the change called death, have no right to claim that they are any nearer God than those who do not understand communication.

This volume, and those that follow, are written not to turn any man from his faith. They are not written to tell the atheist or the agnostic that punishment is waiting beyond the

grave. These books are not spreading a new doctrine of fear, but they are written with the fundamental understanding and belief that every child of God is just as precious to Him as any other child.

- 29 If we really believe in immortality—in life eternal—how can we bolster up that belief by condemning a single individual?
- 30 But there are millions in the world, and there will be countless millions more, who will turn aside from the hurry and toil and worry of their earth tasks long enough to ask what follows the change known as death. The criminal who has been condemned to die, senses a realization, as the hour of his passing approaches, that his materialistic tendencies were wrong and that the law can not take from him that which God gave him—life.
- 31 In the heart of every normal person there is a longing to continue to live. Through lack of development and lack of understanding, that desire may be interpreted as a wish to continue to live indefinitely in the flesh. But it is strange that people will talk freely about heaven, will admit without question that they believe in a future life, and then cringe when they see the hour of their passing approaching. They have believed as they have lived. It has been a habit of thought with them to be accustomed to see their friends around them. Sometimes the anguish that they interpret as grief, can be answered only by the terms of fear.
- 32 And there are persons who, when they learn of a catastrophe in which many people have been killed, feel a smug satisfaction that they retain life on earth. They have escaped. The hour of their passing has been postponed. They feel great satisfaction that they live, through the very fact that they have learned that many have been snatched from the earth-life. Is this attitude fair to God? Does it reflect love of the Almighty? Is it not simply evidence of innate fear? And what is fear but a habit of thought, a misconception of things as they are?

The opinion of no man can alter truth. Whether we believe or disbelieve, if God has ordained that life be continuous, then the truth of life everlasting will come to the doubter when he passes from the flesh. Desiring that he does not wish to live has no more effect upon his immortality than deciding that the force known as electricity should cease to be.

The time comes to each mortal when he or she is called back home to God. When God calls, it is a call of love—not of punishment. Progress is upward, not backward. The Power that placed us here on earth will take us from this earth. The purpose that brought us here must be fulfilled, and very often in ways that we do not comprehend or even remotely recognize.)

The soul itself loves life. The real personality that each of us possesses understands that immortality is a fact.

When the babe is born, a barrier is created. That barrier is the physical organism of the infant. Most of the impressions that child receives must be screened through the fabric of the brain. Definite memory of what came before is shut out. Definite knowledge of what comes after is revealed only upon search. It may come in a multitude of ways. But if full knowledge of the existence beyond were given to all of us, then how could we play our parts upon this gigantic stage? If we were not sent here for certain experience, then what would be the good of making that experience so very real?

Between the cradle and the grave, we work out certain fragments of our progress. Therefore, the material evidence of our immortality may not seem as impressive as the experiences through which we pass. We play our parts behind masks of clay. Some of us are artists and some of us are only beginners. Some of us do our work well and some not at all.

But at intervals throughout our earth-lives, no matter how difficult our tasks may seem, we pause to inquire about the nature of life and about the possibilities of immortality. No matter how engrossed we may be in our daily labors, no matter

how thoroughly enmeshed we may be in world affairs, there come fleeting and sometimes very impressive impulses and inspirations that cause us to say, "The day of death approaches. What about your life beyond the change?"

- 39 Through sorrow, through happiness, through failure and through success, we can never escape the knowledge of individual existence. But like some countries, we make no preparation. The weak nation, through its unpreparedness, may invite aggression. The unbeliever, or the person reared in the theory of the fear of God, may find the hour of dissolution stealing upon him when he is least prepared to meet it.
- 40 Arguments set down on paper relative to immortality can always be combated by arguments supporting materialism. What is called logic is simply a mosaic of thought. It begins from a premise, from an assumption, from an accepted theory, and so long as it does not deviate from that theory, the argument is logical. And thus, perfectly harmonious processes of reasoning may be set up by persons of one belief and persons of another.
- 41 If God had never opened the door, had never broken the seal between earth-life and spirit-life, then upon theory and logic we would be obliged to make our conclusions. But the seal was first broken by putting into every soul certain Godly instincts. There has always been that inner knowledge that life does persist. It is a knowledge that sometimes comes stealing upon the doubter and shocks him back to sober thought. It is a knowledge that makes the greatest doubters most fearful of death.
- 42 But the seal was broken in a still different way. The door between earth-life and spirit-life was left ajar. In every generation since there has been life on earth, there have been means of communicating with those who have gone before. Those persons who have been given the opportunity of participating in this communication have found nothing unnatural about it. They have not discovered any mystery, except that everything we do not understand is mysterious to us.

The astronomer sees in the sky perfect patterns and charts and he knows the stars by their names. He knows their motions and their characteristics. But to the person unfamiliar with astronomy, the heavens at night are dotted with points of light that are very mysterious. There is neither plan nor system in the starry heavens to the mind of the person who does not understand. In every trade and profession there are finer points of knowledge and skill that are mysterious to the outsider. There are processes in Nature that the most highly educated scientists can not fathom. He knows little, because no mortal ever knew very much.

In the hearts of most people, there is an awakened knowledge that whatever God created is natural and free from mystery, and that God has never yet closed the door upon us when we seek to understand. These people are not afraid of God. The more they believe in the love of God, the more firmly convinced they are that whatever God has created is intended, as we progress, for us to understand.

Communication with the spirit-world is an established fact in the minds of millions of earth inhabitants. The thought of communication strikes fear at the hearts of millions of others. To learn more about communication and the conditions under which it is secured, places upon the inquirer the responsibility of giving at least some attention to thought of God and the laws of God. The inquirer does not attempt to subdivide the universe or to place into different classifications those forces known as Natural Law. He does not start out with the assumption that God created many universes. He believes in naturalness. And when he believes that there is one Creator, then he is no longer fearful to ask for messages from those who have gone before.

Many persons professing belief in God, return from the funerals of their dear ones unsatisfied with the beautiful sermon or the wealth of flowers or the singing. Alone in their chambers, their hearts cry out. There is one hunger greater than all their professed belief, greater than all of their accepted creeds. They want the loved one who has been taken from

them. They want to think of that dear one as having life and individuality and those little touches of personality that they knew and adored. And no matter what their confession of faith may be, these mortals in the hour of their grief can not bear to think of great gulfs separating the spirit from the mortal. They can not believe that the Creator they worship could possibly be so cruel as to close the door and keep it closed. And often, in ways they do not understand, they feel the presence of a loved one. Something that does not come to them in words or in physical touch, tells them that the one they mourn is by their sides—not living on some distant planet, not shorn of all the love that persisted during so many years, not a thing of beautiful marble or bronze, not cold and uncaring, but filled with the same life and love that dear one possessed in the flesh.

47 Many persons—millions in each generation—without ever having entered a seance-room, come to a realization of immortality as it is. Irrespective of what their beliefs have been, without regard to what creeds or faiths they have adopted, they find satisfaction that depends upon the actual presence of those whom they loved. But the greater their belief in God, the more firmly convinced they are that God's love for all of his children is so great that he would never place a barrier between life in the flesh and life in the spirit. And when these persons who have felt personal loss, who have experienced grief, who have gone through the agonies of having their friends taken from them, really turn to their Creator in faith and in prayer, the time must come when they realize that their loved ones are with them, that those dear ones never left them and their presence is possible only through Natural Law.

48 Of all the great truths mankind could possibly possess, the greatest is the truth of immortality. It transcends all other truths. And if the greatest of all truths is immortality, then we admit that God who created us, who made life after death possible, must certainly be superior to any evil influence. Then how could a devil perform the greatest miracle of all

miracles? How could he be charged with making a law greater than the laws of the Creator? How could our dear ones come back to us through the machinations of evil, when the process of coming back must be simple compared with the truth of everlasting life?

The truth of spirit communication is widely recognized by persons of different faiths. Millions of people are convinced beyond question of this truth of spirit communication who make no public confession of such belief. The more firmly convinced one is that immortality is a fact, the more naturally that person will believe that communication between spirit and earth is not only possible, but is in perfect keeping with natural law. Irrespective of where we look, we shall never find a more absorbing or personal subject than immortality.

PART II

COMMUNICATION

- 1 Spiritualism is founded on an acknowledgment of a truth that is apparent to millions of persons, and that has been evident to countless millions since earth-life began. That truth is communication between those in the spirit-world and those in the earth-world.
- 2 The processes of communication are numerous. This is true because there are in reality countless phases of mediumship. Therefore, Part II, dealing with Communication, and Part III, having to do with Mediumship, are simply divisions of the same subject.
- 3 Many persons communicate with their loved ones in spirit without the presence or assistance of a third person who is a medium. When such communication occurs, it is because the person who experiences it is of mediumistic tendencies.
- 4 To plunge into the subject of communication without a consideration of conditions governing it, might result in a misconception of the truth of a connection between earth-life and spirit-life. We know that in everything that is done, there are governing conditions. The musician not only requires a knowledge of music, but a means of expressing that musical conception. There must be the instrument. There must be sufficient harmony of conditions to permit of the production of that music. The tradesman requires his tools. He might produce very creditable results with inefficient tools, but he can do nothing unless he has tools of some description and materials upon which to work. The lawyer must be in position to consult his law library. He has not memorized every word and every paragraph and every page in the hun-

dreds of volumes that are at his service. Certain principles of law he has mastered. But each year new statutes are being written on the books, and there are certain legal facts that he may not be called upon to discuss once a year. Before you write a letter, you must have the materials. You must have a place in which to write it. You can not write until certain conditions have been met. The surgeon performs a remarkable operation, but he must comply with certain conditions before that operation is possible. There are details that have to be attended to. He needs certain instruments and certain accessories. And while he may operate under the crudest and most adverse conditions, he still requires definite fundamentals before he can operate.

So it is with everything we do. We must have conditions that are conducive of the results we wish to produce. 5

The blacksmith is not qualified to go into the shop of the watchmaker and tell him what he needs in order to make or repair a watch. The shoemaker is not in position to go into the office of a physician and tell him what remedies he should have on his shelves or what reference books he should have in his library. The farmer would not expect to go into the scientific laboratory and explain to the professors that he would be convinced of the reality of experiments only when he had named the materials and the equipment to be used. The steamship captain would not be qualified to tell the railroad president how the railroad should be operated. 6

The maker of women's garments should not dictate to the maker of men's garments as to how to proceed with his work. The coal miner, through his experience, could claim no right to go into a studio and dictate to the artist as to how he should paint his picture or chisel his marble.

These are simple truths that we recognize readily. We know, first, that no matter what is done, must be done in accordance with certain fundamental conditions; and second, that our experience qualifies us to dictate terms only relative to those things which pertain to our own capabilities. Thus 7

we find many investigators who secure little evidence of a convincing nature relative to spirit communication.

- 8 The individual who says that he is going to make his own law governing the receipt of messages from the spirit-world, is doing what he would not attempt to do if he inquired into any other subject.
- 9 It is self-evident that whatever communication comes from the spirit-world, must be in harmony with God's Law. There is no record that any mortal ever entered into a contract with God guaranteeing that mortal the privilege of naming the hour and manner of his passing or governing his progress in life's different stages. If any one on earth could dictate to God, then that person would be greater than God. When an individual dictates as to God's Law, he assumes automatically a supremacy over God beyond which no egotist could possibly proceed.
- 10 Very often an office employe feels extremely sorry for the judgment he hears his employer express. This boy may have recently graduated from school. His mind is aglow with theories. All of those theories assume the presence of certain conditions and these conditions might not exist in the business the boy enters. Perhaps the employer is a man well advanced in years. He has achieved remarkable success. He is slow to pass judgment. He takes his time before arriving at a decision. Is the apprentice in position to judge his employer? Does his experience qualify him to ridicule that employer? To every one except the youth himself, his position is extremely ridiculous.
- 11 Whenever we inquire into anything with which we are not familiar, we are novices. The explorer who reaches a country about which his countrymen have had no knowledge, does not know what lies beyond the hills and rivers at which he arrives. He is prepared for any change—is on the lookout for any surprise.
- 12 We can not be familiar with all things. No man has ever lived who had in his mind the sum-total of all earth-knowledge.

If we find that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, it is quite natural for us to regard it as a state of progress. And if we become familiar with spirit communication and with the lessons that are brought from the spirit-world, we arrive at the conclusion that knowledge on the spirit-side of life is advanced beyond earth-knowledge. And yet not one of us knows all that mortals have discovered and absorbed. How can we know, before we inquire, any of the truth pertaining to the other side of life?

We must inquire open-mindedly. We must admit that we are encountering a subject that we do not understand. If we begin by dictating the conditions under which communication can come, and if we start out by assuming that we know all about it, then of what use is the inquiry? The person with open mind who admits to himself that there are some things in the universe he has not learned, would likely receive greater satisfaction and make more rapid progress in learning spirit communication than he who comes with the assumption that he knows it all.

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The person who has lost a dear one, would be thankful for one faint whispered "Yes" from the spirit-side. He would thank God for the privilege of hearing the voice of his loved one. And so those who come with love in their hearts, who are impelled to inquire because they wish to know that death is unreal, acquire greater knowledge than the self-satisfied investigator who contends that he is qualified to prescribe laws for the spirit-world, and dictate conditions under which communication can be secured.

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Communication with the spirit-world, we contend, experiences its highest expression in the direct-voice seance, which depends upon a highly-developed medium and upon the proper conditions.

An investigator, or inquirer, or searcher after the truth who is not entirely familiar with the essential conditions, who is not satisfied with merely experiencing communication, often wishes to step into the realm of miracles. All conditions must

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presuppose limitations. When the communication is just as clear and distinct as it is between mortals—when the personality of the loved one in spirit is demonstrated beyond the shadow of doubt—should that not be regarded as the greatest boon that humanity could experience?

Before explaining just what occurs in spirit communication, let us pause to consider some of the different kinds of communication that are received by mortals.

- 16 While the seance-room and the developed medium, meaning the medium who has had mediumship since birth and who has conserved and improved this natural gift, must naturally present the highest form of communication, even the seance-room may give expression to different forms and phases of this truth. Just as there is direct-voice mediumship, there are other forms of mediumship. These are explained in detail in Part III. Therefore, they are merely referred to here.
- 17 Individuals may experience the phenomena of communication. Through the mediumship that concerns themselves only, they may see their spirit friends and hear their voices. They may see and hear their loved ones at the same time. And to these persons, there is exactly the same reality of vision and hearing that there is to the ordinary person in the average visit and conversation with another mortal.
- 18 Communication may also manifest itself in different physical phenomena. Rappings are familiar to many persons. Communications may come through other channels, such as automatic writings. But where the conditions are not perfect or where the medium that is employed is not fully developed, these communications become more difficult.
- 19 In a conversation over the telephone, there may be an indistinctness unless all of the conditions are right. It may be impossible to hear all of the words that are spoken. Remembering that our spirit-friends are guiding us whether they communicate direct or not, and also bearing in mind that they will often seize upon means of communication no matter how imperfect the conditions might be, it is not difficult to under-

stand that there may still be communication without full sense and meaning being carried through. Automatic writings often may be wrong. The ouija board may reflect the thoughts of those who operate it. Sometimes it might be correct, but it is more likely to be incorrect, because any means of communication depends upon mediumship.

The carpenter or the machinist can not do good work with poor tools. The farmer must have the proper implements for tilling and cultivating. The surgeon and the dentist must be equipped thoroughly before they can do their best work. And so the spirit-world must have the best instruments in order to communicate clearly and coherently and carry messages through to the mortal side of life.

In view of these facts, which any spiritualist of experience will recognize as true, errors are often made by those whose means of inquiry are limited to poor instruments.

There is another point that is of equal importance: The individual newly arrived in the spirit-world may be there for the first time. His introduction to individual life occurred in the flesh. He came from Almighty God as a baby. He grew into individuality in the flesh before he entered the spirit-spheres. He is a newcomer in a new country. His only knowledge is earth-knowledge. What he sees and hears, he compares with what he saw and heard on the earth-plane. But the realization of immortality thrills him, and if he can get through to his earth loved ones with a message and make that message sufficiently coherent to tell what he wishes to say, his statements may be erroneous in many instances. He tries to describe that with which he is not familiar.

There are many instances where communications have been given by spirits who were unfamiliar with their new-found state of being. Sometimes these messages have been given to the world, and compared with other similar messages, they are inconsistent.

If twenty persons went by twenty different routes to a city none of them had seen, and the first evening after their arrival

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wrote letters home to their friends describing what they had seen, those letters would present many inconsistencies and contradictions if they were gathered together and compared. In that great city, there might be persons who had been born there and whose life had been lived within the confines of that city for many years. While they would have greater knowledge regarding the place of their nativity than the newcomer would have, we must admit that there are facts about their city that they do not know or even suspect. Consequently, it is not beyond the pale of reason to believe that many who have been in the spirit-world for a long time, may still find that they are limited in knowledge, that there are avenues of learning beyond their present development. They would not hesitate in communication with mortals to admit frankly that they did not know everything.

25 It is easy enough to ask a question. Here are a few questions that any person can propound: What is God? What is life? Did time ever begin? What is the extent of the universe? Those are easy questions to put before mortal or spirit. But to be able to answer them properly calls for knowledge that is infinite, and the creatures of God do not have infinite knowledge, or they would be as great as God.

26 The person who seeks and secures genuine communication, must keep before him the truth that those to whom he talks, those who come from the spirit-side of life and translate themselves into the conditions of our world sufficiently to use our material means of communication, are individuals the same as we. They are persons. They are a little closer to an understanding of the Law of Life than we. Their vision is clearer. They are not hemmed in and bound down by the conditions that restrict us, but they are living naturally in a world that is as natural as this world is to us, and each day they are learning something that they did not know before. They come to us and give us their opinions. They tell us that they are not infallible. They may change their opinions. But they come to us in love. God's own Law of Attraction brings them.

The question is asked frequently if it is not wrong to bring back to the earth those who have passed into spirit. Many sincere persons ask if it does not make the spirit earth-bound—if it is not wrong to command the spirit to return. Did the inferior ever command the superior? What magnificent power does the mortal have to order the spirit-world to do the bidding of the flesh? Does the apprentice command his employer? Does the ordinary citizen of a country command its ruler? Why should we assume an egotism and a power beyond the sense of reason and even for a moment think that it lies within our grasp to command individuals in a higher state of existence? Why do we arrogate unto ourselves a position in the universe that we do not fill? Why should we, in a lower state of being, think that we are rulers over those in a higher state of existence?

The egotism of mortals is more difficult to understand than the laws of God. The false pride of the average earth-person is more beyond comprehension than the law of gravity.

When those on the spirit-side of life come and talk to us, they come through love. It is love that is God's open door between the two expressions of life. They come not for any selfish purpose, but because through coming to us and helping us, they are doing God's work as his ministers and servants. They are thankful that God has given them the privilege to guide and direct us. When we do not see them or hear them, when we do not have the manifestations of their presence, they still direct our steps and our thoughts. They guide us toward our destinies.

The nearer life approaches God, the more fully the individual must realize the laws and the works of God. And as all creation was fashioned in the mold of love, so does an approach of higher knowledge reveal the principle of love more clearly.

Spirit communication may be sought purely to satisfy the hunger in the heart that has been left there by the taking away of dear ones. That is the first principle and the first impulse that turns the multitude to seek communication with those who

have gone before. It is through this law of life—through that expression of Life's Law known as the Law of Attraction or the Law of Love—that causes mortals to seek communication with the spirit-world. And when we say communication, we mean direct conversation. There is communication that is not attended by conversation. Those on earth may feel those in the spirit-world and their inspiration fills them with satisfaction.

- 32 The great multitude must seek the truth through knowledge of spirit guidance. A few are privileged to participate in communication. Those who have enjoyed this privilege and who have been qualified to learn the lessons that are taught, can serve the balance of humanity by writing what they have experienced. And if their experience has been guided by thought and study and sincere desire to learn the truth, then the message that is conveyed to the world will be helpful.
- 33 Beyond the very fact of communication with the spirit-world, beyond the establishment of the identities of our loved ones who have gone before, comes a second step. The spirit-world comes not merely to talk to us, but to bring back messages of that broader understanding gained in a higher state of existence. Those familiar with communication through the mediumship of a capable medium, have the privilege of learning the lessons that the spirit-world teaches to the mortal-world about the Law of Life. Those lessons far transcend the average trend of human thought. They are clear and concise. Those in spirit can say in a few words what mortals would require many words to express.
- 34 The spirit-world comes to guide us and help us and protect us. This teaching does not convey to us intimate knowledge of what the spirit-world looks like, but what it gives to us is to help us to live life on this earth so that we may develop and gain the experience we need, and prepare ourselves for speedier and better progress when we have crossed the bridge of death. And in crossing the bridge, we pay the toll of leaving our material bodies with the gate-keeper. We proceed from there

unhampered by physical conditions, but too often hampered by earth-habits and earth-standards.

It is contrary to all the things we have learned and experienced to believe that a person who has led a miserable and reprehensible life in the flesh, is going to become a saint in a few moments after passing through the change called death. And it is not complimentary to Almighty God to believe that such a person would be condemned to fire everlasting for the mistakes of thirty or forty or fifty years on the earth-plane.

Spiritualists make the agreeable discovery, as their experience becomes more extensive, that all of those who had life here have life on the other side. They also make the more agreeable discovery that God gives everybody a chance. The communication received from the spirit-side of life does not come to us with messages of fear and condemnation and punishment, but with messages of Natural Law and its operations.

In the seance-room—which is darkened because those who gather there have not supplied conditions that would permit communication in the light—it is possible to converse with our loved ones. While they come with a broader understanding of what life means, they come with the same old personalities, but they come with love and a desire to help. They come not to talk about the trivialities that have been, but about the broader life that lies before us. And time and time again, they bring us more tests than we could ever ask. They prove themselves beyond question or doubt.

The better the medium, the more highly developed he or she is, the clearer the establishment of identity; and the purer the grade of communication, the freer it is from impediments and obstacles. If an electric current is interfered with, then the work that current is performing stops. If the conditions of communication are interfered with, the communication stops. When the conditions are good, the communication is clear.

THE SEANCE-ROOM

To convey a more adequate idea of communication, it is necessary to describe a seance-room and what occurs in it during a seance.

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The purpose of this volume, and those that follow, is not to pander to the desire of any person for demonstrations or phenomena. Bear in mind that the purpose of this work is to bring to human beings the messages and the teachings of the spirit-world. We may regard this description of communication and seances and mediumship only as an elementary step in making clear the how and why and wherefore of these communications.

- 39 Any room can be a seance-room. In direct-voice communications, the seance-room is darkened. In control mediumship, this darkness is not necessary. In materializations, there may be and often is a faint light sufficient to distinguish objects.
- 40 Direct-voice mediumship brings the voice of the individual. It uses the forces of mediumship for conversation. The voices are not spoken through the medium; they are spoken direct. Those spirits who have become accustomed, through practice, to talking independently, without the aid of any trumpet, often develop to the point where their voices are just as clear and just as loud as the voices of mortals.
- 41 Everybody in the seance-room hears the same thing. There is no lapse in the processes of conscious thought on the part of the sitters. Those spirits that have less experience in communication, make use of trumpets, that are constructed either of light metal or fibre. These trumpets are on the order and appearance of the megaphone. They assist in intensifying the sound. They are not held by the medium or by any of the sitters, but by the spirits themselves.
- In this description, we are not attempting to give those features that pertain to mediumship. They are covered in Part III and relate specifically and intimately to what is being said in Part II.
- 42 There is as great a variety of voices in the seance-room (in the voices of spirits) as there would be among a like number of mortals. Where a medium is highly-developed, there never can be any mistaking between a male and a female voice, or the voice of one person and another person, or the voice

of a child and the voice of a more matured person. When conditions are good, two or more voices may speak at the same time, and often duets and quartettes are sung. The singing is just as clear and just as loud as mortal singing, but of a much finer quality.

The stranger who comes desiring communication, who brings right conditions, who comes without doubt or cynicism or skepticism, finds that his dear ones are ready for him. Depending upon the conditions the sitters bring, the voices of the loved ones are very strong and the establishment of identity is rapid. 43

The spirit-world is sensitive, far more sensitive than the mortal-world. Any attempt on the part of a member of the circle to command or doubt is the same as closing the door. He has disconnected his wire from the forces. He has shut himself out from communication with his friends. But where he comes with love and harmony, his dear ones are there to greet him. 44

Very often when the voices come, they call the mortals by name and give their own names clearly and distinctly. But every spirit that comes is working in harmony with the Law of Attraction. The inquirer who comes to the seance-room anxious to talk with some dear one, finds that open eagerness is the same as a command. The one he expects to come does not come, but others of whom he is not thinking will address him and talk to him. 45

In the seance-room of The William T. Stead Memorial Center, and in the homes of different members of this organization where seances are held, conversations are carried on in different languages. The medium herself speaks only one language. Those who have known her all her life, know this is true. The members of her household and her immediate friends may speak a number of languages, but certainly not all of the languages and dialects of the world. In the seance-room, in the same evening, many languages are spoken. Persons who have been born in European countries and whose 46

loved ones talk the languages of those countries, hold conversations in those tongues. The spirits often sing folk-songs of their native lands. Indians of different tribes sometimes come to the seance-room and converse with their spirit-friends in their tribal tongues. It makes no difference what the nationality may be. It is immaterial how many languages there are on earth or how many dialects, if persons from those different countries and different sections were to come to our seance-room, they would talk with their spirit-friends in their native tongues or dialects.

- 47 There is no record that any person has ever lived who knew all of the languages and dialects of the world. That is beyond reasonable imagination. But if such a thing were possible, where could a person be found who could come to a stranger and talk about friends of that person, friends in the flesh and friends in spirit, and converse about intimate details in the past life of that person?
- 48 It has been contended that telepathy would answer the question. Any investigator in telepathy will admit that intense concentration on the subject to be transmitted is necessary. The spirit-world tells those in the seance-room not about the things that are on their minds, not about the things they are concentrating on at the moment, but often about facts and incidents that were buried in the past and that might require some minutes on the part of the sitters to recall.
- 49 This work is compiled and written by one who had years of experience in hypnotism and in telepathy. His experience was not the reading of books that other people had written. It was actual practice before the public. And yet, there has never been one condition discovered in our seance-room that could be related to hypnosis or to telepathic communication. We know that our spirit-friends come to us frequently and talk about things that have been said and done in our homes and business, demonstrating their intimate contact with us in our daily lives. No one knows better than the members

of our organization the objections and arguments that are advanced by critics.

Ventriloquism could not talk in all the languages of the world. Ventriloquism could not tell you about the little things in your life that no one else present could possibly understand. Ventriloquism could not assume these endless personalities that always come back the same; and those personalities are the personalities that we knew—that you would know if you had experience in our seance-room. 50

Telepathy can not answer that evidence of personality and intelligence, and that ability that goes just as far beyond your thoughts as the thoughts of your mortal friends who could have no idea of what you had in your mind. We do not say that the spirit-world does not see what we have in our minds, but the spirit-world knows our weaknesses and our doubts. If we come commanding or questioning, we get nothing. As inferiors, we can not command by any natural law or any rule of logic those who are higher than we. And if we come with our minds centered upon some loved one to whom we wish to talk, then only telepathic influence would bring that loved one or would bring the things upon which we were concentrating at the moment. But the opposite takes place. The seeker after truth comes to talk to his departed mother. His whole soul is centered on communicating with her. He has forgotten his friend John who passed on years ago. His friend John comes and establishes his identity beyond a doubt. And then when the inquirer's mind has been removed from his original quest, when he least expects it, his mother's voice talks with him. He may ask for friends who will not come or do not come at that particular time. But the friends he does not ask for and whom he least expects, are very often the ones who talk with him. 51

To the communicants in spirit, the seance-room is not dark. They see just as clearly as we can see in the light, and perhaps more so, because they see not only our bodily movements, but they see what is in our hearts. They see our real selves as well as our physical selves. 52

53 To many persons who have attended seances, the seance-room means only conversation with spirit-friends. Beyond that conversation, these persons never attempt to penetrate. To the one whose heart hungers for knowledge, a tabulation of these conversations and of the phenomena of the seance-room might be interesting, but it would not satisfy. We are concerned with our own affairs and our own ambitions. To know what John Smith or James Jones or Samuel Brown has experienced, is simply to peruse a documentary tabulation of names and facts about persons with whom we have naught in common. If we stopped there, then the truth of Spiritualism would be confined only to these individual experiences. But if communications can bring these little intimate personal touches, if they can re-establish the bonds that death has broken, then why should it not be possible for the spirit-world to come with its lessons, with its teachings, with its guidance?

This book is written primarily not to deal with the phenomena of spirit communication. That is not the object of this work. The purpose is to convey to those who inquire a knowledge of the nature and value of the communications that are brought back to mortals.

54 If the spirit-world is a reality, you may reasonably argue thus: Why can not spirits come back and tell us things that will help us? We are living the one phase of life. We are living in this world—not in two worlds at once—not under two conditions of life at once. We can not escape the reality of this world, nor should we. We are here for development. We are here for a reason. If we were capable of really understanding all the conditions of the spirit-side of life, then we no longer would be content with life on earth. If we could see the greater beauty and greater freedom and greater happiness of the spirit-world, we would take ourselves hence even if our spirit-friends refused to take us. Many people seek a picture of heaven without having solved the simplest problems of their life on earth. Many persons want to know what the spirit-world is like and all about the conditions of spirit-life, when they are neglecting their common duties on earth.

Therefore, let us bear in mind now and continuously that the subject of spirit communication must mean more than the phenomena of Spiritualism. Unless some good can come out of this communication that will aid mortals in better living their lives on earth, of what real value could communication be?

Science itself does not always know why a thing is so. Knowledge pertains to how a thing is done. If we were to confuse ourselves with the phenomena of the seance-room, if we were to devote our time and study to an analysis of the forces that the spirits use in communicating with us, then we would be missing the lessons, the teachings.

We use electricity. We know that it is a force. We have learned the laws that govern its generation and transmission and employment. That does not give us an intimate knowledge of electricity itself. We know that the planets and the suns in the universe move in some rhythmical manner that can be measured accurately by man. We do not know how to create a world. We talk about the ether that fills all space and we know many of the characteristics of this strange substance or force, but when it comes to intimately describing it so that there can be no question about knowing exactly what it is, we are lost.

Thus we find that innumerable persons pursue the subject of Spiritualism very much as they would conduct experiments in their laboratory. We find them going from one medium to another, always employing new forces. We find them demanding their own conditions and getting less and less as they proceed. But those persons forget that they must be on earth because God sent them here, and if God sent them here, it was no trivial matter with Him and should not be with us. They forget that progress must always rest on living our lives the best we can. If Spiritualism is simply to be gauged on a scientific basis where it must be measured by a yardstick and weighed on scales and analyzed with test-tubes, then the purpose of Spiritualism is overlooked.

To thousands of persons in every generation, the fact of spirit communication is admitted. That tact rests chiefly on

the following principles: First, the actual voice of the spirit-friend. Second, the conversation in any language that the searcher knows. Third, the positive establishment of identity. Fourth, consistent and constant evidence of the same personality. This personality comes just the same even if the communicant in the flesh may not visit that seance-room for years. The medium has long since forgotten the visit. Fifth, the value of the information that the friend in spirit gives to the friend in the flesh. Sixth, the merit of the teachings that spirit-friend brings to assist the earth-person to live his life to greater advantage to his own development.

- 60 These principles are known and recognized by countless persons. It is not necessary to enter into finer subdivisions of these principles because, when identity is established, when the personality comes as it was, when the intimate things in the association between the earth-person and the spirit are entered into and discussed, then all question is removed as to the fact of communication.
- 61 Most so-called investigation stops with the discussion of the fact. That is the same as going thousands of miles to visit a friend and then stopping at the front door to read the name of that friend on the name-plate, and turning back without the visit. If spirit communication meant nothing but the establishment of identity, we must admit that it would satisfy the grieving hearts more than any other knowledge. It would do more by far than any other creed or philosophy. But it still would reach only those who had come to the seance-room to satisfy their longing for their loved ones. If Spiritualism can not reach out beyond the seance-room, then of what value is it to the world at large?
- 62 The spirit-world brings nothing complicated. It does not bring involved statements. Communication brings enlightenment—it brings knowledge of a quality higher than the knowledge we obtain from men.
- 63 No matter how convincing all logical evidence of immortality may be, the most convincing of all evidence is the fact

that those whom we knew and loved on earth, talk to us under the right conditions after they have entered the spirit-world. Communication proves immortality. The person who has not had the privilege of communication, rightfully may contend that the final and most convincing evidence has been denied him.

If all the efficient, highly-developed mediums in the world were to devote their lives to bringing communications to mortals, it is doubtful if more than a small part of one per cent. of the inhabitants of the world could ever enjoy that privilege. A study of the truths that the spirit-world brings to us must form the chief evidence that is placed into the hands of the many.

Therefore, as you proceed in your study of this volume and of the volumes that follow, keep before you this fact: Everything that is stated in this and the subsequent volumes is based on information that has been given in the seance-room. In order to not permit error to creep into the transmission of these facts, they were taken down in shorthand, and the shorthand notes were transcribed.

A knowledge of the teachings of the spirit-world, like the experience of communication, knocks at the gates of the heart and they open, and something starts to grow in the inner consciousness that was not in a state of growth before. An experience of communication must not be regarded as a special dispensation to those who received that communication. No real Spiritualist will contend that he should have favors granted from the spirit-world that would be denied to others. He has no right to say that the powers of the spirit-world are at his command for good or ill. He has no right to claim that any change has taken place in his life that makes him better than others. If he is sincere, he is thankful for the privilege that has been given to him. He is glad to pass along to humanity those truths that have been revealed to him.

Spiritualism is often misrepresented by irrational persons by placing before people statements intended as evidence that

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would have no value, unless all that had come before had been carefully explained. Many who are great as measured by earth-standards, do not enjoy that station of greatness in the spirit-world. Many who know that they must come back to the earth-world for another experience in the flesh, feel compassion and kinship with mortals and get into communication with the humblest on earth, because the spirit realizes that his greatness on earth has not elevated him to the same standard of greatness in the spirit-realm. He has learned to measure greatness not by earth-standards, but by development. Consequently, the person of little education or of no particular social or commercial standing, might make a statement to a friend not acquainted with the truth, that some one who was of high position in world history had come and talked to him. A statement of this kind given out boldly and without reasons back of it, is met with ridicule.

68 The avenues of communication open to the spirit-world are few. It is not possible to go anywhere at any time and find a means of communicating with spirits. But it is possible and part of Natural Law for the spirit-world to guide those in the flesh. And it is within the realms of reason to believe that the spirit who has attained high estate in the world in some past experience, might come and speak to the humblest of mortals if the opportunity were offered. But further than that, the knowledge of the Law of Attraction would prove that no spirit would come and say that he was some one else.

69 As you study the evidence and the facts, not simply as you read them but as you delve into them and consider them, weigh them and absorb them, you will become more and more convinced that earth-standards are often false standards, and you will be convinced that all communication takes place according to Natural Law. But you must keep before you the truth that just as there are poor workmen, there are poor mediums—just as there are great geniuses, there are great mediums—and that only through the most highly developed mediums, the truth may come without impediment.

PART III

MEDIUMSHIP

Wherever there is communication, there also must be 1
mediumship.

To describe why one person is a medium and another is not, 2
would be as difficult as to explain why one inventor leads the world in inventions or one scientist is greater than another scientist, or why any one person should do something better than another person can accomplish it. Go to a person who, without mechanical aid, can add a column of figures almost as rapidly as he can move his pencil over them, and ask him how he does it, and he might give you many explanations; but, as a matter of fact, he can not tell you why. Ask the person who is deft in any direction just how he performs these marvelous feats, and no matter what he explains, he must end by admitting that it is a sort of inner consciousness, a something that seems to be separate from mere thought, which he can not explain. Ask yourself to give an explanation of thought, of mind, of spirit, and though you were to devote years to searching for the answer, you must return to the simple explanation that those things are God-given.

Many ingenious explanations of thought processes have 3
been offered by students and scientists and philosophers. Every one of these explanations is more involved than the process of thinking itself. Inquiry will soon convince you that the delicate technique of the pianist is an inner quality. Practice alone will not answer or explain that gift. There must be something beyond practice. An unskilled person might practise for ages and never approach the art of the real artist. One person is born with a natural sense of equilibrium. Another person gets dizzy unless he has a very broad and liberal

foundation beneath him. One person develops an artistic eye that perceives color combinations and effects that most persons can not see.

- 4 It is an untenable statement to ask why if one person is a medium another person can not be a medium. It is as reasonable to ask why, if one person is a mechanician, another can not be a mechanician also—why there are stages in the development of gifts among the inhabitants of the world.
- 5 Any work of philosophy that assumes to explain all things, by that very act assumes to convey God's wisdom to minds that find it a struggle to absorb even the wisdom of mankind.
- 6 There have been many marvelous engineering feats performed in the world. The Pyramids are wonderful. But if a man rises a few thousand feet above the earth and gazes around upon the surface of the earth, he looks into the great bowl beneath him and sees Nature. Man's work becomes insignificant—obliterated. No man or combination of men could build a planet or satellite. Man too often assumes that he is qualified to understand the wisdom of God, which is the sum-total of all wisdom.
- 7 We encounter many things that we can not understand. We are then obliged to simply state the facts as we observe them. We make careful inquiry and do considerable thinking, only to learn that many things that we encounter are beyond what might be termed satisfactory explanations. Why a medium should be a medium, we do not know except to say that it is a God-given gift and was intended to preserve, to perpetuate during its course and time, the means of communication between those in spirit and those in the flesh.
- 8 There is a distinct difference between the gift of the medium and the gifts of other persons out of the ordinary. The writer, the great author, must do actual work of a conscious nature. The sculptor, the painter, the inventor, the musician, the actor, must do conscious labor in carrying out the expressions of their gifts. The medium does not do anything that is conscious effort. At the same time, the medium, after

one seance, may be more fatigued than the artist is after a day with his palette and brushes.

Whatever quality of mediumship it may be, it depends upon some physical characteristic of the medium's body not possessed by people in general. The spirit-world draws some physical force or something of a physical nature from the medium. The medium does not do anything or get into any state of mind except to try to be harmonious, to try to be faithful to the spirit-world. But in the seance-room, the medium does not consciously do anything in producing the conditions of the seance. Beyond that, we can not describe mediumship, and we are not going to attempt to offer any other description. We know that these things are true, and others who encounter them recognize them as being true. Therefore, the gift of mediumship is not like other gifts. We do not know that it could be classified as either talent or genius. We know that through the medium there is an expression of Natural Law that we do not encounter ordinarily.

There are many types of mediumship. There are many expressions of spirit manifestations. There are mediums who can take a flower, look at it and see a vision in that flower of facts that pertain to the life of the sitter. We do not know why this is true. We know that numerous cases of that type of mediumship are encountered. And we also know that one medium may have gifts of several different expressions of mediumship, while others have developed along only one line.

Mediumship itself dates from birth. It may date from before birth. It may come back from the spirit-side of life. It is regrettable, but true, that a very large percentage, perhaps the majority of those who attend seances, aspire to be mediums without having the gift of mediumship. It is possible for many persons who develop faithfully to get certain manifestations. It is possible for the person without histrionic art to study and practise until he fits himself for some small part upon the stage, but he will never become a leading actor. He will never be great in his profession. He has stepped outside of his natural tendencies and powers to do something

for which he was not fitted. The person who does not have the predisposition to do or be a certain thing, may acquire some small part, some of the rudiments of that trade or profession, without ever being talented. Many persons sing who have no natural voices for singing.

- 12 This tendency on the part of the many to become mediums, very often brings mediumship into poor repute among those who see it only incidentally. We must bear in mind that fraudulent persons sometimes pretend to be mediums and resort to legerdemain and tricks that would never deceive an experienced Spiritualist a moment. We can not use those persons as a basis of comparison. We can not judge Spiritualism by their dishonesty. We are not attempting to reveal the different frauds that pretend to be based on Spiritualism. That is not our purpose. There is enough to do in explaining the genuine so far as our power and understanding permit us to explain.
- 13 Mediumship does not always depend upon a seance-room. There are some kinds of mediumship that are independent of the seance-room. But all classes of mediumship are dependent upon the right conditions. To attempt to explain the various kinds of mediumship would be to attempt the impossible. It is regrettable that there has ever been a popular conception that mediumship and fortune-telling go hand-in-hand.
- 14 The medium is the means of bringing spirit communication to mortals. Natural Law at times may prohibit the spirit-world from telling any mortal what is to happen. We shall take up the subject of prophecy separately.
- 15 A common expression used in describing mediumship is to speak of "trance mediums." The condition of trance is another way of saying control. Many control mediums are known as test-mediums or message-mediums. They sometimes deliver their messages from platforms and are not dependent upon a dark seance-room. Unfortunately, many of these Spiritualistic meetings are attended by skeptics, and conditions are bad. This is the same as putting up barriers and obstacles with which the spirit-world has to contend.

In trance mediumship, there is always spirit-control. Insofar as our understanding goes, a discarnate spirit, one out of the flesh, actually enters the body of the medium; and we have reasons for believing that the spirit of the medium in the meantime enters the astral or the spirit-condition. In other words, there is nothing to prove that two spirits can occupy the same body at the same time. There may be trance mediumship without any evidence that the entranced medium is under spirit-control; that is, the control may never talk through the medium, simply holding him or her during the seance so as to make the conditions and forces better and stronger.

Without attempting to enter into a classification of all the phases of spirit mediumship, we shall explain briefly some of the most prominent and most widely recognized types.

Direct-voice mediumship is explained in Part II. A further explanation is not necessary.

In control mediumship, the spirit talks through the material mechanism of the medium's body. This form of mediumship has its restrictions and those restrictions are sometimes very great. Often the medium has only one or two regular controls to deliver messages from those in the spirit-world. Sometimes the control is exercised by a spirit-friend whom one seeks. But if the medium is a woman and that spirit of the friend is a man, while there is a decided change in the voice, the vocal chords are still those of a female, and there is logically a loss of naturalness in the voice.

Again, a spirit may not be familiar with the conditions of that medium or her seance-room, and may not be familiar with the art of controlling the person in the flesh. It is as though you saw a friend through a frosted glass, or as though you were attempting to talk through a heavy door that was closed and locked. There is effort in the communication and that effort is sometimes so great that the spirit fails in bringing through the message that he had planned on conveying. A spirit who has not had the privilege of communicating with

his earth-friends, comes with his earth-conditions. In controlling the medium, he will perhaps give indications of his last conditions on earth, his pains and suffering at the time of his death. Why this is necessary we do not pretend to know, except that it seems to be an essential means of identification. But we do know that the majority of spirits who come through any kind of mediumship, seek first always to establish their identity so as to remove all doubts from the minds of their earth-friends.

19 The more sensitive spirit who wants to be recognized, who wants to bring the truth of immortality, very often may succeed but little beyond that establishment of identity. In the voice-seance, the spirit often will refuse to talk until he has succeeded in getting his name through. He is in strange conditions. He is attempting communication that is not familiar to him, and his voice may come low and in a confused manner. But if all of the conditions are right, then he can come through more easily and clearly. In any kind of mediumship, it is necessary to always recognize the importance of conditions.

20 Materializations perhaps form the most striking division of mediumship. The seance-room is generally lighted dimly with a ruby lamp, the colored rays being more conducive to right conditions than a brighter light. The medium is seated in a cabinet, which may be a closet off the seance-room or a specially built cabinet which divides her from the sitters. It might even be a shawl or a blanket strung across one corner of the room. The medium is entranced. The force that the spirit-world draws from her body is supplemented by certain forces taken from the sitters.

21 In materializations, the spirits emerge from the cabinet, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs or groups, and go to their friends in the circle. While certain changes have taken place in the appearance of the spirit following dissolution and entrance into the spirit-world, those spirits generally come back with the same appearance they had on earth, for means of a better identification. They are of the same size. Their

features and their voices are the same—even their clothing is the same. They are just as solid to the touch as earth-beings. Sometimes the touch feels cold, but that is not the fault of the materialized spirit. It is because the earthly communicant has not brought perfect conditions. The more naturally one goes to one's spirit-friends, the more naturally they will come.

While many of the spirits return to the cabinet before dissolving or translating back into their own condition, some of them gradually melt before one right in the room. Everybody sees the same thing. And sometimes, when good conditions are present, the spirit may build up from a tiny phosphorescent globule on the floor, becoming an unformed steamy cloud, and then gradually taking form and substance until the materialization is complete in detail. And sometimes, also, in disappearing from view, the spirit apparently sinks through the floor.

Usually in materializations very little of the forces can be used for conversation. The more a spirit talks, the shorter a time he can stay in his materialized form.

Why the spirit-world, under right conditions, can take invisible forces, so far as we are concerned, and build up a body like the body the spirit had in this world, is an explanation that we are incapable of giving. We do not know. We do know that thousands and tens of thousands of persons have witnessed materializations.

In some of these seances, where the forces are not strong enough, those in attendance are summoned to the cabinet, seeing their friends, or perhaps only the features of their friends, in the cabinet. Where changes have taken place in the appearance of the body, that spirit may come at some subsequent seance showing himself or herself in different appearance. But the appearance is not so vastly different from the earth-body. It is more beautiful, more spiritual.

There have been instances where materializations have occurred in a very strong light. If the proper conditions are

brought about, all of the phenomena of the seance-room can take place in the strongest light.

- 27 Etherealization is another form of materialization. Etherealization is held in a dark seance-room, the forms appearing phosphorescent, bringing their own light. In all other particulars, etherealization is similar to materialization. When the etherealization is strong, meaning when the conditions are correct, very often details and features of the figure can be discerned.
- 28 Transfiguration is still another type of mediumship. In transfiguration, the spirit utilizes the body of the medium. Around the medium's body, the spirit builds up these forces until the appearance resembles the spirit. But the medium can not change his or her size. There is not that faithfulness to detail that there is in the materialized form. However, the features themselves are really altered just as though the actor were to take his putty and his paints and make himself different from what he is. But the spirit is controlling the medium, and while it is really the medium's body that walks around the room, it is the controlling spirit that is in charge. The mannerisms and voice are those of the spirit. The mechanism is supplied by the medium, not through any art or effort on her part, but through the utilization of the forces by the controlling spirit and with the aid of other spirits. Transfiguration is less satisfactory than materialization or etherealization. Indeed, there are many persons who much prefer the direct-voice because the personality is clearer—the identity brings back all of the little mannerisms and all of the old love.
- 29 But in all mediumship, we must never get away from the knowledge that there are differences in quality. Some mediums might be compared to crystal-clear waters, through which we may gaze and discern the pebbles at the bottom of the lake. Other mediumship is like the water that has a slight motion so that we can look through that water and discern objects beneath it less clearly. And in other mediumship, the surface of the water is broken up by whitecaps or by greater waves. But this condition is not always chargeable against the medium.

Even the best mediums can not produce satisfactory results unless the sitters bring the proper conditions. Upon the communicant depends much of the clarity of the communication.

The medium never brings our spirit-friends to us. We bring our own friends. The medium is the keeper of the gate, permitting us to pass through. In direct-voice mediumship, the spirits materialize their voice organs before they speak. Unless our spirit-friends can grasp the material conditions under which we live, and use them, communication is not possible. The medium forms the connecting link between the two phases of life. It is as though we had a house wired for electric lights. Unless we had the light-bulbs to insert in the sockets, we would not have light. We can never have only part of the conditions and still receive communication.

The spirit-world tells us that women are better mediums than men. They are naturally more spiritual. Their forces are finer. A great many male mediums lose their mediumship in a period of ten years. Few of them retain it more than twenty years. There are exceptions, of course. This is simply the rule. Coarser fabrics do not wear as well as finer fabrics. There are many women mediums who have practised their mediumship anywhere from thirty to fifty years, without any apparent loss of their powers.

The woman medium is less likely to care for material possessions than the male medium. The more the medium seeks the pleasures and things of the world, the smaller that medium's degree of mediumship. The more spiritual the medium, the finer the forces and the more wonderful the communications.

As the medium grows and develops in spirituality, higher guides are attracted. We of the earth seek our associates according to our own standards. If we are educated and refined, we can not be satisfied with the uneducated and uncouth. Spirits having greater development would naturally not wish to communicate through mediums of a coarse and unspiritual nature. If such mediums represented the only avenue open, then an effort likely would be made to communicate through their forces.

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- 34 While in mediumship, the spirit-world uses a material force from the medium, that does not imply physical strength according to our conceptions. The medium might be delicate physically, but her forces might be of the strongest nature. Women have finer instincts than men and normally tend toward greater spiritual development. The woman medium is more likely to heed the advice of her guides. She is more likely to accept their corrections. Her sense of duty is generally greater than that duty-sense in men. The male medium seeking carnal relaxation, usually harms his mediumship. Thrown into the company of other men and perhaps wearying of constant conversation about Spiritualism, he likes to be the same as those other men. The woman medium is proud of her truth, proud of her gift to bring comfort and consolation to those who seek her.
- 35 We find numerous reasons within our grasp that explain to us why a woman medium is generally the most highly developed and usually retains mediumship over a longer period. A delicate plant needs care. Mediumship is seldom like the wild flower that grows in the crevices of rocks. It is more easily comparable to a delicate plant growing in a hot house or a conservatory, in a climate not naturally suited to its being.
- 36 In a more restricted sense, every person is a medium, but he is a medium only insofar as his thoughts and actions are under the control of the spirit-world. This does not mean all of his actions, because man was created an independent moral agent and was left free to make certain selections for himself. But in the sense that all mortals are guided in some degree, there is that universal contact between earth-people and spirits, even though the fact of that relationship may never be recognized by the mortal.

And other persons, as we have explained previously, are able to see and talk to their spirit-friends without the assistance of a regular medium, although these visions and conversations may not come regularly but occasionally. Such persons seldom have the power to give others the benefit of their own

gifts. There is a great difference between this individual communication and that made possible through a real medium.

The beginner who searches for spiritual truth too often seeks fortune-telling through gypsies and clairvoyants, and while many of these persons practise what has been called the black arts, their development is lacking. They misinterpret the messages that come to them, which are given usually in symbolic form.

Well-meaning, but misinformed persons, who seek to be inspired by a desire to prove their superior mentality, warn the public against seeking spirit communication as though it were some pestilence to be shunned. They warn people not to practise or attempt to develop, lest some evil person come and control them.

There has never been any evidence of a tangible nature that there exists in the spirit-world such a creature as an evil spirit, or what some persons call "elementals." The vague and mysterious misinformation that so often has been given to the world, quite reasonably strikes terror to the hearts of the misinformed. There has never been any tangible evidence that there is evil outside of the earth-plane. But there are those in spirit who lack development, who are quite as silly and inane as they were in the flesh. There are children in the spirit-world who must still have their pranks. And where conditions have been suited to spirit manifestations, perhaps these silly and undeveloped persons and children in spirit, moved by an inclination of humor, have caused manifestations that have filled the earth observers with fear.

The highest forms of mediumship opening communication with the most highly developed spirits in those spheres immediately associated with the earth-plane, have brought to the sincere searchers after truth evidence that progression reaches from the earth-plane upwards. Earth people may dislike to admit that their plane of life is inferior. That does not make it any less God's World than the very highest spirit-planes. It is all God's World, and it is all one continuous life.

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- 41 Through mediumship only come these manifestations of life in the spirit and of the truth of God's great law—the Law of Life—and yet we find the evil and the superstitious prosecuting and persecuting the servants and handmaidens of God. We find a medium who has perhaps served some of the most famous in the land, being dragged into a common police court, charged with the heinous crime of "practising Spiritualism."
- 42 What darker ages could there be than the age and time inimical to truth? What greater evidence of mortal egotism could we ask than the presumptions and assumptions of those persons who are afraid of the truth, and who, through the force of their temporary and fleeting authority, seek to change God's World and God's Law to meet and conform with their theories?
- 43 No matter how fantastic and how satisfying and how commercially profitable a religious belief may be, it has still never progressed beyond its status of theory. God's World and God's Law are not altered by proclamation. The weak voice of an ephemeral mortal never changed God's irrevocable laws or interfered with them in the slightest degree.
- 44 Mediumship has been persecuted very largely because those who have experienced the glories of communication, have still been cowards at heart. They have not had the honest conviction to tell the world what they had experienced. They belonged to clubs, to churches and to fraternal orders, but they did not have the moral courage to stand up in the face of such censure as might come to them. They were glad to accept the fruits, but unwilling to protect the orchard. They came in secret to partake of the grapes, but when the vineyard was in danger they disclaimed all knowledge of its existence. And if a man recognizes the truth, knows it is the truth, and is still so morally weak that he will not fight for it, then where can he claim his right to the benefits of that truth?
- 45 Mediumship has passed through its stages of terror and prosecution, because human ignorance and egotism are still rampant. Time was when the medium was burned at the stake or cast to the lions in the amphitheater. Spiritualists themselves have been to blame. Those of influence and position

have not had the discernment to realize that one God made communication possible and gave us the light of the sun. If these truths and these benefits are derived from the same source, then where is the crime and the shame of proclaiming the truth out in the sunlight where it belongs? Suppose that truth comes as something unusual to the majority of persons, does that alter its reality? There are countless persons today who are familiar with machines and devices that are used in conducting the world's commerce. But because those ignorant and uninformed persons deny that such things exist, is that reason sufficient to destroy these wonderful machines and lower the world to the plane of ignorance of those who do not know?

No matter how much mediumship has been condemned and ridiculed and attacked, God has continued to give mediums to the world. He has never closed the door on his silly and erring children. Even though they may be satisfied to murmur many formal and stereotyped prayers that their hearts never conceived, even though they mumble forms that are meaningless to their souls and call those things religious belief, God has still left the door open for them. He has done more than that! Through the vehicles of their own religions he has touched their hearts. He has tried to reach them, no matter what their condition or plane of development might be.

But what greater thing could humanity ask than the privilege of communicating with the loved ones who have gone before? And what mortal has a right to say that one who returns from the conditions of the spirit-world and tells us about those conditions, must necessarily know less than the grovelling earth-man who has not even been able to discern the things of his own world?

Mediumship has come in every age, in every generation, in some form or other, in every country, to every nation and every tribe. And so it will continue to come, because it is in harmony with God's own law. It is more closely related than any other human gift to the underlying principle of love. Though it be abused, though it be scorned, those who abuse it and scorn it must some day pass the portals of death. Etern-

ity is a long, long time. The mortal stay on earth is of short duration. What is the allotted three-score years and ten compared with never-ending time?

- 49 The mortal who refuses to arise above the conditions of the earth-plane, who denies and ridicules and persecutes the sources of truth that emanate from God, has not hurt God. He has not injured or retarded the progress of the world. The only thing he has done is to place more obstacles in his own path, and sometime and somewhere, before he can proceed on his long, long trail, he must remove those obstacles of his creation with his own hands and his own energy.



PART IV

TRANSITION

Because humanity has regarded most of the problems of Life with superstitious dread, there is common terror of death.

The passing of the spirit from the body, or more properly, from the physical-body into the spirit-body, is the second most important period in earth-life. Just as birth was the beginning of Life's alphabet, so is death the end. But both the beginning and the end pertain not to life as a whole, but only to a certain stage of the condition of life. In order to progress through a series of earth-experiences, it is necessary to live under earth-conditions.

The physical-body corresponds with the other materials that make up the earth. It is composed of those materials. It belongs to them. The constituent parts of the body were here before the spirit came to claim it and abide in it, and they will be here after the spirit has left it.

There are gross materials and there are fine materials. The coarse materials are usually called matter. The finer materials have been commonly referred to as ether. Even in this material-world, we find grades of quality. But even our finest materials are still coarse compared with those materials, if they may be so called, that exist in the spirit-spheres of life.

The physical-body is undergoing a continuous state of waste and repair. There is no reason to believe that the spirit-body does not also undergo changes. There are differences between the two bodies. There are differences of texture and differences of functions. The great difference lies in the fact that the material-body decays—it grows old. The material tissues set and harden, which is another way of explaining "old age." But

from the spirit-world comes the information that there is no decay, no hardening, no aging in the materials that comprise the spirit-body.

- 5 Life has its origin on this earth so far as individuality goes. Life itself comes from God. It is coexistent with His existence. Individuality demands a body. The life-principle, or soul, or whatever other name we choose to give it, operates through a body, and this looks very much the same in spirit as in the earth-plane. It is a body constructed to meet the particular needs of man. It meets those needs in spirit and on earth. At birth, whether for the first time or through reincarnation, this spirit-body is ready for the spirit. Death can never be so sudden and unexpected, whether to the new-born infant or the aged person, without finding the spirit-body ready for the spirit.
- 6 The majority of persons pass many times through the same change that we call death. During the course of their earth-lives, to be more specific, their life enters their spirit-bodies and journeys in the spirit-world. Sometimes memory of these journeys remains upon waking. Usually it does not. This is a fact recognized by many Spiritualists, and by many who claim no knowledge of Spiritualism.
- 7 Generally, when a memory of these astral or spirit travels remains, it is an imperfect memory. The journey was taken not as we travel when we go sight-seeing. Such astral journeys are for the primary purpose of permitting our spirit-friends to get closer to us and to impress our real selves with our duties and the necessity of our development.
- 8 Many persons who have experienced these astral or spirit travels, and who retain an imperfect memory of what they have seen, relate their experiences and thereby often impart unreliable information about the spirit-world. Under spirit-conditions and in the spirit-world, we are naturally tuned up to the conditions of that life and they are natural to us. But in the earth-body, with our thoughts operating through the mechanism of our material brains and nerves, we are not in position to either understand spirit-conditions or to withstand the shock of that greater knowledge.

Nevertheless, the majority of mortals pass through the identical change of death at different times during their earth lives. The change of transition that we may dread is a simple change, because it is natural. The spirit-world informs us that mortals undergo and suffer innumerable pains that far exceed any possible pain of death. Indeed, at the moment of passing, as the body becomes weaker and the strength of the spirit reveals itself, the earth-body no longer feels pain or inconvenience. To the watchers at the death-bed, the act of passing might seem painful and laborious. The farther away the spirit withdraws itself from the body, the slower and more difficult become the bodily functions.

The spirit is never ill and the spirit is never weak. It is never injured. It never suffers pain. These are the negative attributes of the physical-body. Often in severe illness, persons so closely approach dissolution that their spirits see and hear the sights and sounds of the spirit-world.

Frequently, as a person is passing over, that person will call out the name of some dear one who has gone before, because the spirit sees that dear one and hears the voice. Persons who recover from serious ills retain a mingled and imperfect memory of these experiences. That memory is confused with the delirium of the illness.

The actual process of dissolution may continue for a long period, it may be gradual or it may be of very short duration. In case of accident or sudden passing, it is natural that there should be no particular preparation for that change. The body is in a state of sound health. It is good for many years.

Let us take the case of a person who has been killed by an explosion. That explosion might be so great as to so disintegrate the physical-body that no portion of it can ever be found. So sudden and so violent has been the death, the victim of the accident has no realization that any injury has befallen him. He finds himself in spirit. But his body looks the same and feels the same, except that it is absolutely free from any imperfection or ill. He is clothed the same, and it would be very difficult to convince him that he had passed through the change called death.

Without being able to reason why or explain why, we give the information that comes to us from the spirit-world relative to the spirit-body and the material-body.

12 We are told that the fragrance of a flower is the spirit part of that flower. In other words, the emanations or conditions that cause that fragrance are nothing but evidence of the spirit part of that flower.

13 Ordinarily, when we speak of spirits we mean individuality, humanity, people like ourselves. Let us not forget that the spirit operates through a body at all times and that it does not simply have its being in thin air. It is not an isolated center of thought floating in space. The spirit-world is as real as our world. Whatever God made must be natural to His creatures, because they could not exist in any environment or under any conditions unless they had been provided with the means of that existence. The physical-body could not live on the spirit-side of life. Its materials are different. Its purpose is different.

14 Returning to the example of the flower, that something which causes the fragrance belongs to the spirit-side of life—to the finer materials. And the flower that dies in our world, blooms again in the spirit-world. The fruit that grows in our world, has a new existence in the spirit-world. This would lead us to believe that to all material things there may be an inner something, or essence, that in reality is more solid and more enduring than the material shell or casing which contained it. Consequently, it is not merely thought or individuality that endures—it is not simply the something we call life—but it is something that God calls life. And if the flower that blossoms in our earth will blossom again in the spirit-world, then there must be that same inner something to our own physical-bodies that can give us our spirit-bodies.

15 Many attempts are made by persons of a scientific turn of mind to explain the why and the wherefore of these conditions and these changes. It is as difficult as attempting to explain the law of gravity or the exact identity of any natural force.

We are told that these things are so, and that when we reach the spirit-side of life, we shall then be in tune with the new conditions and shall be able to more nearly understand what those changes really are.

Those who have sight can watch fuel burning in the grate, and they see the flames and the smoke. They see the fuel crumbling to ashes. They see these things and therefore they are natural. Viewing this process of combustion or disintegration, people will say that they understand why the fuel has been consumed. As a matter of fact, they merely see the result of the processes that have taken place. They do not actually witness the union of the oxygen and the carbon. They are told that this union occurs, and having seen the flames consume the fuel, they are satisfied with the explanation. They would be equally satisfied with any other scientific explanation that might be given to them regarding the processes of combustion or anything else that they witness frequently.

But, in like manner, those on the spirit-side of life unquestionably see many things that we do not see. They may see and probably do witness certain interesting phenomena attending the birth of a child or the death of a person. In other words, they become familiar with what takes place, and from observation and under instruction, they learn about the different conditions that may attend birth and death. This does not necessarily give them a perfect understanding of what has been worked out according to Natural Law.

It is a property of individuality or life to become familiar with the things we see and hear frequently. Often this familiarity never goes beyond the point of recognition. You may pass down a certain street every day for years, and you recognize different buildings. You know nothing about the people who work or live in those buildings. You see certain outward evidence and you accept it as a fact, and say that you are familiar with what you see.

Around and about you, changes are taking place constantly. What right have you to say that there is anything more

remarkable in the death of a human being than there is in the crushing and withering of a flower? What right have you to declare that the one is a tragedy and the other an incident? Whence comes your authority to assert that the one is nearer God's Law than the other? There is probably a difference. The mortal who passes from the flesh goes into the spirit-world with a fund of experience. Perhaps the flower carries no experience with it, unless it be the experience of change in accordance with Natural Law.

20 To the persons who are unfamiliar with the real process of dissolution, there would naturally be terror because death is then a mystery. But is it any more a mystery than the countless things that are around and about us? The sleight-of-hand performer delights us with his cunning. We are amazed and mystified. But if he explains to us how the tricks were done, then the mystery has vanished. The mystery always vanishes when we know what lies beyond. Give us the reason for anything that occurs, and no matter how remarkable it may be, we regard it as ordinary, as natural, as quite in keeping with the laws of the universe.

21 The less people attempt to understand about God and the real problems of life, the more fearful they are likely to be of the transition called death. They are not afraid to clothe themselves in new garments. They are not fearful of moving into finer homes. Why should they be more afraid of death?

22 But in regarding death as a natural and logical change, in harmony with law, let us not feel that this knowledge absolves us from any duty that may be ours in the earth-life. Feeling that death is a welcome change must not be an excuse for us to either long for it or seek it.

23 During the endless eons of eternity, we shall reside under spirit-conditions. The period, or the sum-total of the different periods of our lives in material-bodies, comprises so small a part of our total existence, we should regard earth-life as a rare privilege.

Death must naturally mean something different to different persons. To the individual who has been prodigal of his talents, who has dissipated the forces at his command, death comes more as a rebuke. It reveals the knowledge that the work that should have been done on the earth-plane was neglected. But to the person who has fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability, death comes as a reward, as a mark of progress.

If people would stop thinking less about the mechanism of death and the mystery of it, and regard it more as a milestone determining progress in life, then the passing of the spirit from the body would be more like the locking of the office doors at the close of the day's business. Many savage tribes, and particularly the American Indians, regarded death as a reason for feasting and rejoicing. The brave who had been taken to the Happy Hunting Ground was to be envied.

Civilization seems to have made death a pet horror, which is a rebuke to civilization. The person who regards death only as a reason for deep grieving and endless sorrow, has small confidence in God and in Natural Law.

When we consider that those in spirit refer to the dates of their earth-deaths as their birthdays in spirit, we receive a new angle of vision. Viewed in this light, death is vastly different from the ordinary conceptions that the world has built up and accepted. Regarding death as passing through an open door, the very frequency of death in any community should be a sermon based on right living. It should be a warning that this change that comes to every earth-person, must have a much deeper significance than the funeral and the grave. Meaning the passing into a higher and better state of life, it should suggest the advisability of preparing for that change.

Instead of praising God that a dear one has passed into better conditions, how many of us censure God and judge Him for calling that dear one home? Many a parent who has lived for material gains and pleasures only, receives the first intimation of the real meaning of life when a child is taken from that household to the spirit-realms. Death is not only a

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natural process—it is not merely the birth of an individual into spirit-conditions—but it is very often a teacher to those who remain on earth.

29 In passing through the change of dissolution, the individual loses none of his individuality or characteristics. No great gulf separates him from the life he has lived. He is the same person existing under changed conditions. But the possessions that have really been his in the world, which are possessions of character, remain his; and his unpaid debts, the squaring of accounts with those he has wronged, also remain his. He very often finds himself much closer to earth-life than he was while he lived in a material-body.

30 And just as people live different experiences and are on different planes of development, so must they form different conceptions of the change when they have entered spirit. If we were to record the experiences and views of a thousand different persons who had passed into the spirit-world, we would probably find a thousand opinions about the sensations of death.

And so we find a great variety of opinions about the experiences of this world. To those who are unprepared, death may be a surprise, even a shock. To those who have had previous understanding of what dissolution means, the transition is perfectly natural and in keeping with what was anticipated. If people would study the physical phenomena of death less and its significance more, then the terror of death would vanish and its purpose would become clear.

31 Morbid curiosity makes many so-called investigators in Spiritualism and kindred subjects put great stress upon death. That subject seems to form the beginning and the end of every inquiry. They do not place any importance on their passing from their homes in the general and normal course of their business. They do not regard as important or morbidly interesting the opening and closing of a door. And yet down at the bed-rock of fact, death is no more mysterious than these simpler things.

32 Men of science who have declared that they have never been able to find the soul in dissecting the body, would probably

also admit, if they were pressed, that they had never discovered the seat of fragrance in analyzing a flower, or the germinating power in a kernel of wheat.

Death itself suggests changed conditions. It suggests that there is Natural Law that apparently does not affect material things, and that other natural expressions of God's Law that affect material things, apparently have no concern with the finer materials of the spirit-world. 33

Just as a book is more than its covers and its pages and its ink, so is life more than breath and the circulation of blood and injury and pain. Knowing only a small fragment of any subject, which is the ultimate of all human knowledge, can give no mortal the right to say that he even has a grasp of those materials and laws with which he is familiar. If mankind knew all about the universe, then there could be no new discoveries and no new inventions. The very fact that there are new discoveries and new inventions, is proof conclusive that the ultimate of human knowledge has not been reached. Only when new things cease to be, can any person say that all knowledge has been gained. 34

Those in spirit tell us that each day they are learning something new. They are encountering new problems and receiving new instructions, and yet the simplest among them have knowledge so infinitely greater than earth-knowledge, there is little comparison. 35

The door between spirit-life and earth-life is transition, dissolution, death. Is it better to regard death as merely a ceremony and a cause of mystery and pain and grief, or to look upon it simply as one more proof that God has divided the processes and the stages of life according to understanding and progress? Are we going to stop at the door and examine it without ever inquiring what lies beyond? Are we going on a long journey to visit a friend and turn back when we see his home without proceeding to see him? Are we going to paint the subject of death in nothing but the sombre hues, when death itself is evidence that we are living in the shadow and that those on the other side of the barrier are living in the light? 36

PART V

SPIRIT EXISTENCE

- 1 In the universe, there are conditions and forces of many descriptions that we do not see, hear or feel.
- 2 Even without such overwhelming proof of existence beyond the grave as that afforded by communication, no mortal of a materialistic turn of mind would be able to offer sufficient evidence of his theories to convince any developed person that life ends with death.
- 3 So long as it was God's Plan that earth-life be separated from life in spirit so far as tangible, ever-present, material recognition is concerned (and this pertains wholly to the perception of those in the flesh), there was good and sufficient reason for making "the world next door" unseen and unheard to the majority of us most of the time.
- 4 In the earlier stages of their study, most of those who become interested in Spiritualism, ask about the same questions: Where do the spirits live? Under what conditions do they live? How can they come to us so easily? Do they have their existence in different worlds—on different planets—or do they live right here? Do they eat? Do they have occupations? Do they sleep?

These questions could be extended indefinitely. Many answers might be given, and each answer be as acceptable as any of the others.

- 5 We are living this life—the earth-life. We are not in tune with the conditions peculiar to spirit sufficiently to understand those conditions on the basis of any explanation.

It is a regrettable fact that so many students of Spiritualism persistently miss the Teachings—fail to learn that which Spiritland would impart to us to aid us in our earth-life progress—and will reach out for explanations that would not assist us appreciably did we understand them.

We may argue that information about the spirit-world, if it may be so termed, is interesting. True. There are many interesting subjects in our own world if we will but inquire into them. We love to make a mystery out of life, and we strive to concern ourselves more with Life's mystery than with its reality. We seek the distant fields—believe that in some far-off country success awaits us. And that is rather a mortal habit of seeking an alibi. It is more because we wish to excuse ourselves for our apparent shortcomings here that prompts us to search for that which seems farther away, and promises greater happiness.

Superstition also causes us to inquire into our future state of being. Fear of punishment or hope of reward, pauses us at times and asks us questions!

There is a degree of danger of missing the fundamental lessons of Spiritualism even in taking up the subject of conditions in the realm of spirit-life.

Persons who write automatically (and into whose writings there generally creep the seeds of their own thoughts), often portray "the Homeland" for us with a fidelity that astounds us.

Such persons usually are not competent to describe accurately that which they see in their own world. There are persons (and they are mediums or of mediumistic tendencies) who retain memories of the spirit-world—not founded on former existence in spirit, but based on their visions, their astral travels. But most persons retain imperfect memories of these travels. Those memories are obscured by conditions of life in the flesh.

Persons who have been near death, will tell us that they were in the land of the departed—and their descriptions are often

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akin to delirium. They lack naturalness, and whatever God created has naturalness. Life in spirit is as real and natural as life in the flesh, and much less restricted. What a shock it would be to any mortal, passing through the gates into the spirit-life, to enter conditions wholly different from those he was accustomed to on earth! If there is no breaking off of the individuality, why should there be a breaking off of the naturalness of life?

- 12 Morbidity belongs to the earth-world. Morbid descriptions of spirit-life are earth-man's descriptions. It is not our purpose or our right to attempt to describe that which we can not describe.
- 13 The spirit who has been on his first journey—who came to the earth as a babe from God's great storehouse of Life, and who has never seen the spirit-world—may succeed in getting messages through to his dear ones on earth, and these messages are cluttered up invariably with attempted descriptions. That is natural. The man who has been in a distant city many times, writes to his friends about his business and his experiences. He does not concern himself with descriptions.
- But the person in that city for the first time, sees its newness to himself, and describes it. Perhaps his description lacks in fact and depends upon his first impressions. He makes many mistakes. But his impulses are to describe—and perhaps to pass comments on the persons and things he sees.
- 14 Thus, from the spirit-side of life, we may receive descriptions of life in spirit. But from those spirits who are older, and whose experience is greater, we receive no such descriptions. Such spirits tell us that we could not understand perfectly that which they would attempt to describe. The things of spirit—the conditions of spirit-life—are grasped by those in spirit, who live the conditions and could appreciate the description.
- 15 We are told that there is only one world—not two worlds; one life—not two lives; that we of the flesh are spirits as much as we shall ever be; that upon entering the spirit-life, we shall be the same individuals, with bodies looking much the same, but free from age and decay and sickness.

We are told that the spirit-world is "right here." We do not understand that it is "a world within a world." We do not know that where our buildings stand, there are buildings we do not see. We do not know that, when our flowers die to bloom again in the spirit-world, they bloom in the same place they occupied in this world. We might advance theories and explanations. It is not our right to do either. Certain things we have been told, and beyond what we have been told, we do not attempt to go, principally because we recognize in Spiritualism not a geographical or topographical study of the spirit-world, but a Truth, that teaches us how to live better the life we are living.

But the change is not a mental one. It is not metaphysical. Conditions are different, but just as natural to those in spirit as our earth conditions are to us of the earth.

We shall repeat only what has been told to us. Beyond that, we can not go without speculating.

We are told that the spirit-world is much more beautiful than our world, that it has what we call scenery—a surface of their earth, or ground, or whatever it may be termed; that they have rivers and lakes, but no oceans; that they have large and beautiful cities, live in homes that are far more beautiful than ours, eat food, have rest-periods corresponding to our sleep, some form of bodily waste and repair, are the same size they were on earth, live a social as well as an intellectual existence, and converse through mediums with spirits in higher spheres, who are as invisible to them as they are to us.

Their food, they tell us, is mostly fruit, prepared in different ways. They serve their foods on dishes—and have servants—and wear clothing, different perhaps from ours, but not so much different as to be startling or peculiar.

Our dear ones from the spirit-side of life enjoy humor—are neither solemn nor unnatural. They are not isolated wisps of thought living in thin air. They are real. Their reality impresses itself upon us at all times.

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- 21 How those in spirit translate themselves into terms of our world, we do not know. But we do believe that it is voluntary, and through working in harmony with certain expressions of natural law that we do not comprehend.
- 22 In our seance-room, we talk frequently to spirits newly arrived on the spirit-side of life. Many, who had paid no particular heed to the subject of Life in this world, insist that they are still in this world, that they see only what they saw before. They see no spirit-world. They do see more persons than they saw in this life. They see those who, they know, passed through the change called death. That puzzles them.
- 23 Later—maybe days or weeks or months later—these same spirits come to us and admit they know where they are—that they have become attuned to the change. And rarely can they refrain from commenting on how wonderful Life really is, and how vast is the goodness of God. We believe that, when they are ready for progress, they come into harmony with conditions that make possible their seeing the spirit-world. We do not know that they are taken on a journey, or that miles enter into the subject of the change.
- 24 We look down upon the mortal remains of some friend, and say, "Now, he knows!" Perhaps he does not know—but is very curious to understand the nature of the change that has taken place. Just as we might hesitate to admit that death makes saints of some persons whose passing we note, so is it unreasonable to believe that the ignorant person who goes through death, suddenly comes into possession of infinite knowledge.
- 25 Nor have we the right to say that the person educated according to earth standards, has grasped immediately the full truth of the spirit-world when he enters those conditions following death.
- 26 Normally, each twenty-four hours, about eight thousand persons pass through death's portals into spirit. Some of these persons are prepared to progress; others are not. Some are making the journey for the first time; others are returning home, and recognize their Homeland as soon as they enter it.

To place all beings on a parity of development, is a wrong conception. Our progress in this world is slow. We study much and learn little. We practise much and become indifferently proficient in one or two directions; rarely more than one.

Is there anything in our experience to lead us to believe that we are qualified to pass into a state of sainthood and infinite wisdom simply because we die? It seems unreasonable to believe such could be the case. God asks none of us to believe the unreasonable, but only to struggle to develop and make our upward journey with reasonable effort.

Spiritland is busy. It has its work—more work than we have on earth. Its conditions permit of caring for this work with more expedition than is ours. Its strength is greater by far than earth-strength. Otherwise, how could the spirit-world control mortals?

We do not pretend to know why distance means so little to those in spirit. We do know that distance is of small consequence, and that they measure progress by results of work done, by the accomplishment of tasks undertaken, and not by the clock or the calendar. They will say, "It takes what you would call five minutes," indicating that their view of time differs from ours. Why this is true, we venture no opinion, except that time measurement is natural to the earth-world, that our goings and comings are governed not by a grasp of Natural Law and brighter, better knowledge that is common to the spirit-world, but by birth, death and engagements.

We do know that spirits newly arrived on the other side, attempt explanations when they are not qualified to explain. They would be serving themselves better by observing and learning. We know that volumes have been written describing spirit scenery and spirit manners and customs. We doubt that any such descriptions are dependable.

While the subject of Planes and Spheres is taken up separately, we refer to this subject briefly here: The Homeland or Summerland, as it is referred to frequently, is more accurately

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described by those in spirit as "the third sphere." The first sphere is apparently the one encountered immediately after death. Presumably, it is dependent on the development of the spirit. In the first sphere, we believe that he sees little more than he sees on earth.

- 33 The lower spheres—the first two, we presume—are evidently realms of study; school-houses, if that term conveys the right impression. Those who enter these spheres must study—often to grasp the simplest truths of spirit-existence. Their teachers evidently come to them from the Homeland, or third sphere.
- 34 Consequently, guidance is not confined to helping mortals, but extends also to helping millions in spirit.
- 35 Lack of knowledge may be styled ignorance. It is not evil. There are ignorant persons in spirit, because they entered spirit in ignorance. And in that darkness of ignorance (darkness sometimes being accepted literally by students of the subject), they cling to the things they know the best—namely, earth-conditions.
- 36 Such spirits sometimes "get through" and deliver messages. Highly-developed mediums do not attract them any more than highly educated persons would attract them. The messages given by these undeveloped persons typify their ignorance. Some so-called investigators never get any better evidence than this. If one visited the slums, one would not attempt to place all human progress on that low plane.
- 37 We have heard the voices of undeveloped spirits, with all their old imperfections of speech, and yet we have never heard one that counselled evil! Ignorance and evil are different. Both pertain to the earth-world; ignorance alone is carried into spirit. But unpaid debts are carried into spirit. Let us not mistake that fact.
- 38 While the finer materials of the spirit-world (usually referred to by the spirits themselves as ether) are invisible under ordinary conditions to those in the flesh, the reality of the spirit-world and the spirit-body is not affected by that difference.

Painters generally describe spirits as white—as light, without color. Those who have witnessed materializations observe that there is as much naturalness or coloring to the spirit as there is to the earth-person. Through some higher knowledge of natural forces, those in spirit, as they develop, give out a light that is sometimes visible to mortals. Materialized forms often "carry a light," that may surround their heads much like the halos painted by the artist around the heads of his conceptions of spirits. In the voice-seance, these lights appear often, but may not be seen by all. In the homes of those who have developed their spirit qualities, such lights may appear. Etherializations are built up of these forces or particles that give out light.

Under certain conditions, the exact nature of which we do not pretend to know, those in spirit can and do give physical manifestations of their presence.

Out of such manifestations may grow stories of "haunted houses."

In reading what has thus far been set down in Part V relative to the conditions obtaining in the spirit-world, one might well say that little is known, that such information as we have is indefinite. That is true, chiefly because the purpose of those in spirit is not to teach mortals what Spiritland looks like, but to bring back helpful information and guidance to assist us in living our earth-lives better.

Departing from that type of information that might be described as the finer physical facts of spirit-life, we come to another branch of information in which we find everything very definite—nothing obscured. There are classes of facts that those in spirit discuss freely with us. And as these facts pertain to the state of mind more than to spirit-bodies or spirit-substance, they should be of much greater moment and concern to mortals.

There is a "universal language" in spirit—an understanding that does not depend upon words. There is only one view of life—the Truth. There is no fear, no judgment of one

another. There is harmony, because there is greater understanding, and because the restrictions of earth-conditions have been overcome.

- 45 There is no sickness in spirit. That does not mean that there are no ministrations in the spirit-world that we would describe as "doctoring." But the term, doctoring, is used only relatively. Upon entering spirit, many whose lives have been hemmed in by ignorance and selfishness, may not only be at a loss to understand that a change has occurred, but they may refuse for months or years to believe that such change has taken place. Instead of awakening into a full realization of what has happened, they may be in a state more like a coma than anything else.
- 46 The soldier who dies in battle may persist in trying to fight, wondering why his efforts do not kill the enemy. He needs talking to and helping. He has carried his disturbed state of mind into his new state of existence. That, too, is natural.
- 47 There are children in spirit—the children who pass over from the earth-world—and they are cared for by women who have been assigned to such mothering duties. But there are no births in spirit. Ours is the seed-world.
- 48 Those in spirit (meaning those spirits who have progressed and who are cognizant of the conditions of spirit) refer to their world as the solid world, to their bodies as the durable bodies, and to our material as coarse and insecure. We know that they pass through our walls as though no walls were present, and that they are free from some expressions of Natural Law (such as our force of gravitation)that pertain to our own grade and status of material.
- 49 The inhabitants of the spirit-world have broader opportunities for learning. They see facts more clearly. Their minds are brighter and their likelihood to err is less than ours. They do not claim infallibility, because only God is infallible. They offer opinions, and offer them as opinions, and not as unmistakable fact.

They tell us that many planets (some formed of our coarser materials that we see, and others of finer materials which we do not see) are inhabited—but always by those who first came into life through our own earth-plane.

They tell us that there are many spirits whose duties are not in conjunction with the earth-life, but that no spirit ever loses interest in our world, which is God's Cradle of Creation.

Those in spirit tell us they are without carnal desires, and have a broader conception of Love than we could have. They do not have temptations such as ours.

Our loved ones in spirit come to us through Love—through Natural Law. They come to guide. When opportunity offers, they communicate with us. That opportunity calls for mediumship of some description, and if we go hither and thither, seeking always new mediums, we ask our spirit-friends to accustom themselves to ever-changing conditions. We forget that we familiarize ourselves with a home, or a neighborhood, only after living there a long time, but we expect them to become familiar immediately with no end of strange conditions. Even in trying to learn more about the truths of their life, we put up needless barriers against them.

But if those in spirit were as visible as those in the flesh, if we had our loved ones around us after death as plainly as before death, and if our own earth conditions were not real to us, how could we gain experience? When God left the door open between the two expressions of life, He did so not to ask us to live any other form of life than our own, but to prove immortality to us and to enable us to gather direct information from the spirit-world so as to help us live better in our own world. Naturally, the Truths that are brought to us are far more beneficial to us than an intimate knowledge of what the spirit-world looks like and where it is located.

Much of the world's ignorance has been encouraged through the desire of people to hear what they expect to hear, to be endorsed in the theories that they cherish. It will be disappointing to many, at the outset, to be told that only when we live in spirit can we understand the facts of spirit-existence.

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- 56 But it should be encouraging to every mortal who seeks light, to know that the spirit-world brings freely to us the facts that are most helpful to us.
- 57 We are told that it is a privilege to live the earth-life numerous times—to go through earth-experiences. Even the pain and the disappointments are privileges. They are real while we are here, but in spirit, their great purpose is recognized.
- 58 Our spirit-friends tell us that the children who leave the flesh and enter the spirit, not only have the loving care of mothering, but that they are shown their earth-parents and are aided in their loving desire to help those earth-parents. Those children go to school—or to the "educational halls," as spirits refer to them. And they have their play-time and their toys—their pets and their games. They live natural lives, and live those lives happily.
- 59 There is no diversity of religious belief in spirit. There is only knowledge of God's law. There is closer harmony with natural law—more intimate contact with Fact. There are no police—and no courts. There is no political creed—no ruler save God. Every one is given the same opportunity to develop. No one is held back by jealousy and intrigue. Littleness of regard for the rights of others belongs to the earth-world. It has no place in spirit. Greater understanding means a broader conception of the rights of others. The impediments of our world, both spiritual and physical, cease with the change called death. Yet many persons fear death!
- 60 Too much have we of the earth become enmeshed in the phenomena of spirit-conditions and communication; too little have we waived those phenomena as non-essential after the fact of communication is established in our minds, and have sought the Truth that our spirit-friends bring to us.
- 61 Our spirit-friends tell us that they are happy. We ask them how they can be happy when we are miserable and sad. They reply, "You can not give that which you do not possess. We wish to bring happiness to you. First, we must possess happiness. When it is ours, we can give it to you."

Life in the flesh (life incarnate) differs in conditions from life in spirit (life discarnate), but it is all one life—differing only according to the conditions under which it is lived. 62

Wherever there is Life, there also is Life Everlasting. We can not claim continued existence and deny it to the animals we see around and about us. We can not deny Life to anything that lives. Word from "across the way," from Spirit-land, informs us that all life is everlasting—that there is no change in individuality—that there is no transmutation of one form of life into another form. Death is not a transmutation. At most, it is a translation. 63

It is not for us to inquire why God sent us here when conditions in spirit are so much more agreeable. We are creatures of God's creation. Our place is not to criticize Him. Our understanding is small—very small compared with those in spirit, and particularly those who have been in spirit a long while. It is not our place to say that God is wrong, when we have grasped but fragments of the truths that God has placed before us to study. 64

Just as the person at the pantry-door is nearer the bread than the one waiting in the dining-room for the serving of a meal, so are those in spirit nearer the Truth, in closer harmony with Natural Law, than we of the flesh. If the teacher attempts to instruct the pupil by beginning with the very ultimate knowledge of the teacher, the pupil does not learn. If the teacher talks in simple terms, the pupil can learn. And if our spirit-friends attempted to instruct us according to their full knowledge, what we received would be confused in our minds. In passing that information on to others, we would spread wrong ideas about spirit and spirit-life. 65

But when the spirit-world comes to us to teach us in terms that we can grasp, and we recognize in those teachings nothing that is harmful but everything that is helpful, which is the better progress: to seek through the medium of theory and phenomena, or through the medium of fact? Is it better to try to know just what takes place in the spirit-world, and what 66

it looks like, or to learn the wholesome truths that are taught to us by our spirit-friends—truths that will help us make more progress here?

- 67 To some persons, it is abhorrent to think of reaching a sphere in life where one's parents are no longer regarded as parents in fact—and where one's brothers and sisters are no longer brothers and sisters in fact.
- 68 Of this much we may be sure: Only as the person who passes through the change called death, is equipped to receive new truth, will that truth be given. The intellect, in spirit, may grasp facts much more rapidly and readily than the same intellect in the flesh, but no mind is expected to grasp facts more rapidly than those facts can be assimilated.
- 69 The person newly arrived from the earth, who is not qualified to understand the greater truths, will not receive them immediately. They must come gradually—as one is able to learn. No one could impress any of us with a fact that we could not understand. There are facts all around us on this earth that mean nothing to us. One might glut on food; no one can glut on knowledge, because our capacity to comprehend decides what we learn. The individual must progress step by step in spirit the same as on earth.
- 70 If the spirit newly released from the flesh, has lived in spirit before, the memory of that existence returns. That person has greater knowledge than he suspected he possessed. To him, the greater truths of spirit are not a shock, but taking up the thread-ends where they were dropped when he entered the body of an earth-babe.
- 71 Spiritualism is not founded on an exhibition of pictures of cities in the spirit-world, or of scenery beyond the great bourn. It is based on Truth that concerns all life and all development. The most precious messages from the other side are not those dealing with manners and customs of life in spirit, but with Natural Law—with the Great Purpose. And as we grasp the significance of these Teachings, we come into a better understanding of what we are, our whence, whither and why.

Those things that we thought would be most interesting in the beginning (the phenomena), fade away in our minds as of no more importance than the instruments and mechanisms and processes that might bring word from some friend in a distant country. We are concerned with the contents of the letter, and not with the names of the steamships and trains and other means of transportation that brought the letter to us. We wish word from a dear one—and are not particularly interested that our friend lives in a two-story or a ten-story house, so long as he lives, is happy, and is successful. We are concerned with his experiences, and not with the kind of community around him.

It is no mark of progress on our part to suddenly wish to be in spirit, once we have gained some knowledge of communication. God put us here. God makes no mistake. This world is very important to us. This life is a privilege. Should we leave it by our own overt act and enter the spirit-world, no sooner would we be in spirit than we would see that our real earth-work was undone. And no actual happiness could be ours until we had returned and completed the task that we had shirked.

In time, each of us will see and understand the spirit-world. The period of dissolution comes on apace. That is something we can not escape. Our burning curiosity to know what Spiritland is like, will be satisfied in time. But more important by far is that we live this life well. And if the Teachings from our spirit-friends can aid us in this progress, those friends have been infinitely more kind to us to bring us those Teachings than they could have been in bringing us maps, charts and pictures of their Homeland.

By the merit of the Teachings from the spirit-side, may we form a better understanding of the real purpose back of Spiritualism.

PART VI

NATURE AND NATURALNESS

- 1 Wherever God places us to live, there things will be "natural." Scientific writers sometimes speculate on what might happen to us if we lived on some other planet. Their assumptions are based on our having the same kind of bodies. With these earth-bodies, we could not live under those changed conditions. Hence, if we find proof of life on any other planet, we may be certain that the fact of life under those conditions, proves that those who live on that planet are living according to Natural Law. They are not fighting Natural Law. Their life is natural.
- 2 With our flesh-bodies, we could not live in the spirit-world. That does not prove that there is no spirit-world; it proves only that the conditions are different. But to those in spirit, there is as much naturalness to their existence as there is to ours in this life.
- 3 Denying Nature is useless. Saying that there is no reality to our earth-existence is senseless. Nature is part of God's work the same as man. The soul itself is expressed through Nature. The life-principle that has not yet been incorporated into individual form, is life just the same, but it is part of the great Life-Principle. It is part of God. Released as an individual, being born into the flesh as a person, given individuality everlasting, is done in harmony with Natural Law. How and why, we do not venture to say. That is at the very bed-rock of knowledge. No mortal and no spirit possesses that great knowledge. It is known by God alone.
- 4 If we deny reality to any of the works of God, we deny reality to God. What more futile process of logic would be imagined?

To say that there is no Nature, is to say that there is nothing. Yet everything to us seems to be very real. The spirit-world tells us that things are as real as we believe they are. And we are told by spirits that Life expresses itself through material—the gross or coarse material of the earth, or the finer material of spirit-existence, but material always. Remove that material medium of expression from Life, and the result is what?

All Nature does not need depend on the one set or group of conditions. We know that part of our own material is unseen to us, that natural energy is different in many ways from material particles, but that it operates through and in harmony with that material. And we know that our spirit-friends converse with us through the conditions of mediumship, and tell us that they live in a real world, with real scenery and in genuine homes—unseen by us. Their conditions belong to nature and inasmuch as they are so constituted as to live under those conditions, it follows that their world is natural to them.

The works of Nature are always more wonderful than the works of man. No man ever created anything. The best he has done was to use what God gave him, and nothing more was expected of him. Nature does not depend upon our thought or effort in her continuity. Nature exists without our help—and her laws operate whether we recognize them or not. We can not deny Nature out of existence any more than we can destroy our own souls.

Illness is proof that Nature is real. Without breaking Natural Law, there could be no illness. If the saintly person disobeys Natural Law, he suffers quite as much as the person who claims no relationship to sainthood. The evil-doer may live in closer harmony with Natural Law than the very religious person. One might be very wicked and have sound physical health. One may be very saintly and be a chronic invalid. Therefore, proclaiming ourselves believers in this or that theory, does not free us from or make us superior to Natural Law. When the day of death arrives, we die without respect to our opinions concerning Nature. When we need food, we become hungry, even though we deny Nature in our theories.

- 8 The person who really possesses knowledge regarding Natural Law, tries to live in harmony with that law. And all Natural Law does not concern the flesh. The unseen parts of the universe are just as important and as extensive as the seen. Whatever exists, has its existence in harmony with Nature—and this is true of life in spirit the same as it is of life on the earth-plane.
- 9 Because we say that we have studied science and understand the workings of Natural Law, we should not say that we understand all expressions of Natural Law. God's Law is concerned with more than keeping the planets and suns in operation. His Law reaches also into life, thought, development of persons.
- 10 His Law pertains to the rat quite as much as it does to the bird of paradise. It governs the savage fully as much as it governs the well-dressed, highly educated and refined person. It is not our right to say that God loves one more than the other.
- 11 Natural Law—God's Law, whether it be expressed as gravitation or as the Law of Compensation—is always unchangeable. Man-made laws may be relaxed to suit the convenience of the occasion. Man shows favoritism. God has no favorites. Man makes laws and permits his friends to exceed those laws and escape punishment. Any one who breaks any God-made Law, is punished, whether he committed his error through purpose or ignorance.
- 12 If God's Law were ever changed, if it ever relaxed, if it pertained to one and not to all, then of what value would experience be? If we learn through experience, then when we encounter certain conditions, we must rely upon the law pertaining to those conditions to be in force always. Our opinions can not alter God's works. They are as they are, whether we recognize them or not. When the time comes for us to be able to recognize them, through the force of our progress, we shall find them as they have been at all times. This gives us the foundation for reliance upon all that which pertains to God.

Were there ever a time when an apple would fall upward instead of toward the earth, and do so naturally, then the Law of Gravitation would be dangerous. We could not depend upon it. But sometimes we think that some phases of Natural Law change, because we do not observe properly. We think that there is no punishment for those who do evil, and only injustice for those who do good, and the reason we commit this error is because we see only a fragment of the facts. We do not know what has gone before or will come after.

Not understanding Nature or Natural Law perfectly—or even passably well—we make a mystery of many things that are beyond our learning. When we really have learned how Natural Law operates, what happens under certain conditions, we have gone a long ways. We know Natural Law by its results. We do not know just why it is a law, or what takes place in order to produce results. It is still as much a mystery to us as it was before, but we feel more familiar with it. We regard it as natural. The source of that law and our own source was one and the same. Both arose and exist in God. Natural Law and Life are not enemies. They bear harmonious relationships one to the other. The Law is not a free moral agent. We are free moral agents. That makes us feel at times that we are superior to Nature. Hence the conflict. The Law will never change. We must change. The Law will not seek to accommodate us. We must seek the Law and conform with it. Having illustrious grand-parents or being very wealthy or influential in our own communities, will not place us above Natural Law. God recognizes and practises no favoritism, and offers no exceptions to His Law.

If spirit communication were not in harmony with Natural Law, it would be impossible. God made the Law that permitted such communication. Surely, He knew what He was about. If some devil permitted what God frowned upon, then that devil would either have command over Natural Law, or would be superior to it. Neither could take place, because what can be superior to God? There is no space, no

infinitely small corner of the universe in which God does not exist. There is not a division of matter or energy that is outside His Law. There is no force or possibility of the existence of anything in the universe superior to God's Law, because such a force would be superior to God, and that would be equivalent to saying that there is no God. Without God, no Law could exist.

- 16 Man lives under the dictates of Natural Law whether he realizes or wishes it. Man also lives under statutes enacted by his fellows. The spirit-world does not ask man to disobey or disregard the statutes of his world. They are essential to world-conditions. They are part of the naturalness of his existence. Being so far deficient in an understanding of Natural Law, man has to regulate himself and his neighbors by laws of his own.
- 17 If earth-folk understood Natural Law, they would need no other laws. They would work in harmony, as they do in spirit. But not understanding Natural Law, we must have regulations to govern our own conduct with relation to one another.
- 18 These are not the only considerations of Nature and naturalness that may assist us in thinking. We find that the more we are in accord with Natural Law, the more natural we are. Instead of placing restrictions upon us, this greater knowledge gives us greater freedom. There is more freedom in spirit than in the flesh. Yet both harmonize with those expressions of God's Law that pertain to their different states of being.
- 19 Admitting that certain expressions of Natural Law that pertain to our material-existence, do not affect our spirit-existence, and that those in spirit live in accordance with other expressions of Natural Law pertaining to their conditions, we must not feel that Life would be possible without needing some expression of Natural Law to regulate it.
- 20 The great fundamental Law of Life reaches us in the flesh the same as it does in spirit. We are spirits now as much as we shall ever be—living merely under different conditions.

But our thought and sense of being, are things of the spirit. The Law that pertains to the spirit in one place and under one group of conditions, pertains to the spirit anywhere and under any and all conditions.

We are told sometimes that Nature makes mistakes. This is not true. But it is true that conditions may arise that are contrary to absolute harmony with Natural Law, and that Law, in its operations, no longer expresses itself through channels familiar to us. 21

Disease is unnatural. Disease is possible, but it is not natural. It is a breaking of Natural Law. But that Law continues to operate through whatever channel is left. Nature tries to heal the sick person. Nature does not design idiots, but there are idiots. There are mistakes of the flesh—traceable to some distorting of natural conditions. 22

We have said that the existence of a devil would be impossible. But disease exists. Did God make disease? He made Natural Law, and Natural Law presents its own penalties for disobedience. The disease-germ is not dangerous except under certain conditions, and those conditions are not possible except as Natural Law is disobeyed. The plant flourishes on food that would kill man. If man attempts to eat food that is intended for plants, that does not amount to an error in Natural Law. The plant seeks its food through that Law. The plant is not a free moral agent. If our material bodies were not subjected to unnatural conditions forced upon them by our own ignorance, we would not be ill. 23

We may meet with accidents. So may plants and other things. The accident is due to the operation of Natural Law. If we get in the way of some fast-moving object, we are injured or killed. We could not change the Natural Law that put force back of that object and its motion. And if we swallowed poison through ignorance, it would make us ill or kill us. But that accident would still be in harmony with Natural Law. 24

When our spirits entered our bodies at birth, we came in health, and not in sickness. Even though a man may pass out 25

of this life by his own hand, he must enter the spirit-world in harmony with Natural Law. The error, no matter what it is, has its limitations of duration. Natural Law operates always. It does not change.

26 The person who seeks spirit communication, and who goes naturally—as naturally as though he were about to converse with some old friend—brings natural conditions. His spirit-friends come to him more naturally. They feel his conditions. They know when he is suspicious or skeptical. If he feels a superstitious dread, believes that he is associating with ghosts, his fear is unnatural. And if he feels an ecstasy that is equivalent to hysteria, that also is unnatural.

27 Only as we act and feel natural in our earth-affairs, do we learn readily or do our work well. Any strained effort or unnaturalness in our minds, is easily felt by those in spirit. They feel only what exists. Our fears, disbelief or hysteria, therefore, are real, but brief. They are contrary to naturalness. We have placed ourselves out of tune with Natural Law. And when we do that, we fall short of natural results.

28 Viewed in the wrong light, a knowledge of spirit-life may be regarded by some persons as cause for discontent with their present state of being. They may feel that their earth-bodies are impediments. But God gave each of us an earth-body. That body is God-given. It is placed in our charge for a definite purpose, and no matter what our knowledge of spirit-forces and facts may be, there is nothing to justify us in holding our earth-bodies in contempt. They are ours to take care of, and if we refuse, then we must live the earth-life operating through imperfect instruments. 'We are like the tradesman with worn-out, dull tools.'

29 Persons of small development, often turn in superstitious fear from the Truth. They are familiar with their own ideas and their own conditions, and are disinclined to believe that any change is advisable. They condemn Spiritualism for the same reason that many persons condemn any progress in the world, any invention, any breaking away from old methods.

Columbus believed that the earth was round, but most of the people of his time thought he was mentally unbalanced, or a falsifier. Today, even the ignorant accept the statement that the earth is round, not because they have proved it, but because it is the natural thing to believe.

The child starting in the kindergarten, can not be expected to suddenly grasp what the pupils in the higher grades have learned. Time and effort are required for any learning, for any change in natural processes. Those who have not passed through successive stages of development and learning, may regard with suspicion the statements of those who have had that development. Only as we know, and become familiar with, or live under conditions that are familiar to us, do we feel natural. But let us study and progress, and after a time, that which was quite beyond our comprehension becomes plain and natural.

We recognize many things we do not understand. When we say that we understand a thing, we mean that we are familiar with its conditions. We may be familiar with the operation of machinery and be able to operate that machinery, without knowing the mechanical principles involved in its construction or operation. Desire to know—study, thought, inquiry—leads to a better understanding of the machine, makes one workman farther advanced than another. To progress is natural—precisely as much so as becoming familiar with those things with which we are in frequent contact.

* The spirit-world glorifies God in the very knowledge that the vistas of learning are limitless—that there is always something new to study. If our friends in spirit told us that they had grasped the sum-total of knowledge, could we look forward to progress with any thrill of expectation? We would either have to admit that, in some manner, we were transported from plodding, erring mortals to the highest spheres of understanding, or that there is not much to learn after all. This would be disconcerting, because the wisest mortals have learned only a little, and that not very well.

- 33 To the person who views the subject of Spirit Communication with alarm, and styles it unnatural, there is lack of understanding the principle that we see things as we develop. We may develop along parallel lines—may progress as much without one kind of knowledge as without another kind. We do not have all-knowledge. God alone has that. We do not have knowledge comparable with hosts in spirit. We may interpret our views of life in different ways, and yet have as sound views as any one else. But the person who has refused to dogmatize his intellect, and who hungers for knowledge, and makes inquiry into what the spirit-world teaches, is natural. He is in harmony with progress.
- 34 There are forms of material development that remain material. Acquisition of great wealth is equivalent to doing wonderful things for one's body—at the cost of neglecting the spirit, perhaps. And constant complaining over one's poverty or illness is equivalent to becoming bound down and hemmed in by material conditions at the expense of spiritual development. And so may deep study of purely material things shut out knowledge of spiritual things. Too often we measure the standing of mortals by their possessions or their learning, and not enough by their spirituality.
- 35 The very fact that contact with conditions brings about a feeling of naturalness, may not only cause us to disregard the truth of Natural Law, but it may retard our development. The young man who decides to leave home, misses the sights he was accustomed to, and the persons he knew. If his homesickness causes him to leave his broader experience to return to his limited scenes and restricted life, then he misinterprets naturalness. Once he became acquainted with the big, outside world, it would be natural enough to him. The great traveler is as much at home in one country as in another. The great student feels at home no matter what subject he essays to delve into.
- 36 God's Law opens the way for greater knowledge and greater progress than we can conceive possible right now. Are we to inquire into God's way with timidity? Is that complimentary

to our Source? If God has made a thing possible, He knows infinitely more than we shall ever know, or than the sum-total of all knowledge possessed by His creatures.

God is natural. He is in us and with us closer and stronger than the things of His creation. He resides in no one place. It is His Power that makes all things possible. And God's World is this world the same as the spirit-world. It is earth as much as it is heaven. Our spirit-friends tell us that there are times when they believe that perhaps God loves us more than He loves them, because in our ignorance we seem to be farther from Him. 37

We may worship God at many shrines. We may worship Him through His Works. There is not only one door open to us, but many. But when we realize all the naturalness God put into His Creative Force and His Works, we must grant that Love alone made it possible—and can we not understand the Love of God better and clearer by appreciating the love of our spirit-friends—even though they may live under conditions that seem strange to us of the earth-plane? 38

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PART VII

SPIRITUALISM

- 1 Spiritualism is a faith that has been little understood. Except in a limited sense, Spiritualism has never been organized. There are numerous spiritualistic centers and churches. But the spirit-world wishes Spiritualism to be a religion of the home and the heart.
- 2 Too often the church-member takes up his religious faith when he enters his church, and lays it aside when he passes through the doors on the way home. This does not mean every church-member, but some church-members.
- 3 Spiritualism has been known generally as something interesting, unusual, mysterious. Consequently, it has attracted numerous so-called investigators.
- 4 Many heavy and labored scientific opinions have been published regarding Spiritualism. This phase of the subject is treated separately in this volume. It is mentioned here merely in passing, because we wish to classify those who turn to Spiritualism.
- 5 Investigation, as it is termed, or curiosity, as it should be termed, accounts for one class of those who take interest in Spiritualism. This class is concerned mainly with the phenomena. The second class consists of those who have been bereaved and who find greater consolation in communicating with their dear ones in spirit, than they could find through any mere religious belief. The person who turns to the seance-room purely for the purpose of communication, is moved wholly by the heart's desire to pierce the veil and overcome the barriers that separate earth-life from spirit-life. This second class is by far the largest. The third classification

is usually secured from the second class. Many who come to the seance-room for the purpose of communication, discover that their friends in spirit are very desirous of helping their dear ones on earth through instructions. The members of this third class find that there are teachers on the spirit-side of life whose duty it is to instruct. Their vocation is teaching. They are instructors in the truths of Natural Law that their clearer vision enables them to understand.

Hence, in gaining a better knowledge of the subject of Spiritualism, it is necessary to proceed beyond the mere fact of communication, and gain a better understanding of the Teachings that come from the spirit-side. The real Spiritualist is a student of the Law of Life. Only a limited number can ever experience direct communication, but the entire world may profit from the Teachings of the seance-room, provided those Teachings are placed before them. That is the object of this volume, and those that follow.

Any inquiry into Spiritualism is no more complete with the knowledge of the phenomena than a journey would be complete with the purchase of a ticket. The phenomena are simply means of leading mortals to the truth that lies beyond.

In each heart, or more properly in each soul, God placed certain instincts. These are very often lost sight of through harsh contact with material affairs. The Spiritualist knows that this truth is planted in every heart. And he realizes also that there are different stages and planes above him. There are different types and classes of people.

As the Spiritualist looks around him and sees the different churches and edifices, he feels no anger. He does not resent those edifices and organizations of formal religious belief. He realizes that each one represents an interpretation of universal truth, and that each creed is carrying the same message in different terms to those persons who can best understand that particular interpretation. The real Spiritualist does not ask a man if he is Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, Gnostic or Agnostic. In each mortal, without respect

to race, color, nationality or position in life, he sees a child of God with the same rights and the same guarantee of an opportunity to progress that the Spiritualist himself possesses. Indeed, the Spiritualist should have sufficient breadth of view to know that he often deserves less credit and merits greater condemnation than those who have not had access to the Teachings that have been his. The Spiritualist knows that as he gains knowledge, more is expected of him. The man who knows the law and breaks it voluntarily is far more reprehensible than the person who breaks the law through ignorance. While ignorance of the law—be it God-made or man-made—excuses no one, there is naturally more compassion for those who are in the deepest darkness, than there is for those who see the light and still refuse to follow it.

- 10 Spiritualism does not make man perfect. Only God is perfect. Spiritualism does not make man the equal of the angels. If it helps him to live his life better and develop faster and more thoroughly—if it helps him to recognize his faults and seek to overcome them—it has started him along the road to progress.
- 11 But all human progress is not a continuous forward movement. Very often the world itself has gone through periods of stagnation and retardation. And thus the Spiritualist knows that the weakness of the flesh prohibits any mortal from being the equal of those in spirit. He recognizes the truth that the intense reality of our earth-experiences makes the task of right living and of progress doubly difficult. But knowing these facts, he has great compassion for his fellow-beings.
- 12 Spiritualism does not operate through religious propaganda. There are individual Spiritualists who have a wrong conception, a half-born notion, of the truth of their belief and who attempt to force their belief upon others. But the student of the Law of Life realizes that the individual who is coaxed or forced into a belief of Spiritualism, is not coming voluntarily and can not benefit nearly so much as he can in his present faith.

There are reasons why Spiritualists believe that any searching after truth must be voluntary. Those reasons will be revealed in this volume. To tell one's friends and neighbors that there is such a truth, to give them an opportunity of inquiring if they wish, represents the beginning and the end of any conscientious effort on the part of the true Spiritualist. He sends no missionaries to convert others to his creed. He interferes with the religion of nobody else. And if he attempts enforced missionary work, he is disobedient to the teachings he claims to understand.

The Spiritualist does not call himself an investigator. He is a believer. He realizes that in proportion to his faith, he will receive benefits and blessings. He knows that only as he works for development, can he receive it. He appreciates the fact that no gift of development is going to be bestowed upon him. He realizes the truth that his own development should mean more to him than it could to any other person in the universe. It is his own progress that concerns him.

Each one of us has a full-sized obligation in living our own lives. We can not live any other person's life. No matter how similar and how parallel the experiences of two persons may be, they are still separate individuals and there are still differences in their experiences, because thought itself is a form of experience.

Fear of tomorrow, lack of confidence and woeful fallowness of faith are shadows that too often beset the wayfarer along life's trail. Only as a person realizes that "All is well that ends well," that beyond the portals of death there can be no hunger, no deprivation, no suffering, no fear; is he equipped to deal with life's problems with a cheerful heart. Millions of persons have mastered this fear and have laughed at difficulties without knowing any of the truths of Spiritualism. And the reason they have been unafraid and confident is because there has been within them that reassurance that "All is well."

- 17 God gave that instinct to every one. Some have found it and heeded it, and others have set it aside temporarily because their silly fears have crushed them and mastered them.
- 18 If God made all things, He made them for a good purpose. If harrowing experiences come into our lives, they come for a good purpose. Time will pass. The grief and poverty and pain of today are not everlasting. Conditions will change and eventually those who suffer will be free from suffering, and those who fear now will be free from fear in the future. Fear itself is a negative condition. It is closing the door on our source of greatest assistance.
- 19 The investigator often tells us that belief alone is not sufficient. With his self-labeled magnificent intellect, he says that reason and judgment alone will answer all questions. He does not pause to think that some of the greatest inventions have come like inspirational flashes into the minds of the inventors, and that the winning strategy of battle has come with the speed of a shock to the intellect of the general or field marshal, and that sometimes what we term the most trivial incidents prove to be the very things that have saved our earth-lives.
- 20 If we set aside faith, what is there left? We know that we did not create ourselves. We have no reason to believe that we selected the date and place and manner of our birth. We know that we have nothing to say about the hour of our passing. We are unfamiliar with the forces of Nature in which we live and of which we are a part. We are but fragments in the affairs of our own governments. Everywhere we turn, we meet conditions beyond our control, and yet we are confident that tomorrow will find us well and happy and successful.
- 21 Often this confidence, so far as reason and judgment go, is based on a few men in charge of great affairs. The employe in an office has faith that his employer will keep the business going. The employer, who is in debt to the banks, is confident that the bankers will see him through. The bankers, who depend upon the depositors, are certain that no sudden demand will be made upon them for the deposits.

And yet believing in other mortals, we find contentment and faith. And if we could gather together all the mortals on earth and all those in the spirit-world, and added up the sum-total of their powers, the result would not be comparable with the power of God Almighty even in the ratio of an atom compared with all of the matter that comprises our world.

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If we are not to have faith in the Cause that gave us life, then how can we have faith in anybody or anything? We see honest and morally good and dependable people in our own neighborhoods, in our cities, in our countries; but the greatest goodness and the greatest dependability of any man are not to be mentioned in the same breath with the goodness and greatness and dependability of the Creator.

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No man, or combination of men, brought this universe into being. Yet we find ourselves believing in men. We find many times that our trust was not belied—it was well placed. Suppose we had proportionate faith in God: Would we not be qualified to regard any handicap, any obstacle, as all right, as perfectly natural, as presaging some great good that would come at some future time, but that previously was not revealed to us?

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We find people who are afraid to spend money. They hoard every coin that they possess, and very often we find them poor and miserable. We encounter others who are willing to take a chance—who believe that their efforts to build greater business each day will attract to them some force which they may not understand, but in which they have implicit confidence. As we read the story of human progress in all generations, we encounter facts beyond numbering that prove to us that many of the most remarkable achievements of the human race are to be credited to those who risked everything they had, who went through the dismal, dreary fogs of adversity, who suffered pain and hunger.

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But few of us store up a sufficient food supply to last us many days, and yet we are not fearful that we shall go without food. Millions and tens of millions and hundreds of millions

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pass along earth's mortal trail living "from hand to mouth," from day to day. Somehow they get through. Many of them are happy at the termination of life's journey. Often when they seemed to have reached the very end of their resources, something occurred that gave them a new opportunity.

- 27 No matter what our claims may be, irrespective of how much weight we may put upon our powers of reason, if we but pause to analyze ourselves and our fellow-beings, we shall make the discovery that of all the qualities in mankind, faith stands at the top.
- 28 The helpless babe has greater faith in its mother than the greatest man ever had in God. Life without faith would not be life. Reason and logic may seem to prove certain contentions and theories. But where it satisfies one person, faith is carrying millions of others through the trials of life safely and securely.
- 29 Faith means loyalty. Without loyalty, there is no faith. The business man should be loyal to his business partner. Each of us should be loyal to one another to the full extent that the measure of duty places upon us. When we see a person loyal to his faith, though we may disagree with the tenets of his creed, we can not help admiring him for his steadfastness.
- 30 Sometimes the trials of life are severe. Things go wrong. Hardships pile upon hardships, handicap follows handicap, sickness and loss of property and the death of dear ones make life a fearful burden. And yet when one's faith is sufficient, even though one may bend under the blows and be prostrated with sorrow, there is still that loyal belief that eventually things will work out—that sometime, somewhere and in some manner things will be different.
- 31 The greater one's belief in God and His Natural Law, the greater blessings one is going to receive throughout one's life.
- 32 But these are only a few of the beliefs of the Spiritualist. He has other beliefs, and his faith is greater as he learns more of the Teachings that come to him from the spirit-side of life.

PART VIII

CHARACTER AND GODLY INSTINCTS

1 Certain truths any person may understand without even the knowledge that there is such a condition as spirit communication. While the seance-room is the open door that brings direct evidence, there is an open door also in every heart.

2 Whatever God gave us, He gave us to use. He did not send us on a long journey without equipment. He did send us into the world naked—He sent us without material possessions. But in the hearts of every one of us He left the imprint of certain instincts. He gave us the power to think. He gave us that individual sense of being. He gave us an innate knowledge to distinguish between right and wrong. He gave us faith. Many qualities were instilled in our souls. Those things we possess. They are in every babe at birth. They are the things that God gave to us.

3 The material things around and about us He merely lent to us. Possessions and wealth are ours only as a loan. When the hour of our going arrives, no matter what we have accumulated of the world's goods, must be left behind.

4 We came into the world with certain possessions, and as we improve those possessions we are sure to leave the world with greater riches than we had in the beginning. Many persons may blunt their sense of right. As one becomes more avaricious, as one becomes more grasping, one puts just so many more opaque wrappings around the things that God has given.

5 In some respects, the lower animals have greater wisdom than men. The elephant will not eat the shell of a peanut, or even the tough brown skin inside the shell. Man eats many

things that are inimical to his health. Scientists have sometimes told us that man alone thinks, but that the lower animals are guided only by instinct. Their instinct often gives them more security than our wisdom. While man has a thought-force far superior to the animals, at the same time he has the same instincts that are theirs, except that his instincts are attuned to his position in life. He has instincts of right and wrong that we would not expect to see in the tiger. He has what religious writers have often referred to as "the still, small voice." This does not necessarily mean that he hears words of admonition, but it means that certain inclinations come upon him. Something tells him that a thing is right or wrong, and if he will listen to the pleadings of his own soul, he will never go very far afield.

But there are other influences that are in him, which we shall come to in the next part of this volume.

- 6 Character is something different from learning or station in life. Often we find that the most obscure persons have the strongest characters. Character is another way of saying bigness of individuality. Character means mastery over selfishness. It means that one is true to oneself. No outside enemy can ever harm us so much as we can harm ourselves; therefore, character relates to our own conduct to ourselves as well as to others. If we are true to our own Godly instincts, we are going to be true to the world—to the universe—to God.
- 7 In creating us, the Almighty used His finest forces. Except for His children, there would have been no need of His mighty universe. Material creation was born in the laboratory of evolution countless ages before God sent His first living, breathing being into the maelstrom of experience. He prepared the setting for the greatest of all dramas—Life. And so careful was He in that preparation that He found a place and a use for the smallest division of matter. He built according to Law. And when conditions had finally arrived at the proper point, He sent into His world a sample of Himself and called it Man.

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Contemplation of the privilege of life builds character. Knowledge that God has placed a duty before us to perform, makes us true to ourselves and strengthens our characters. 8

God sent nobody into creation unequipped. Even the idiot and the lunatic, who had been made what they are through error, will find themselves compensated for their lost opportunities when they are freed from the material snarl of their imperfect bodies. 9

How often have criminals pursued their unholy careers in defiance of God and man, only to weaken when the day of their execution arrived? They had told themselves that they could live apart from God and God's law, but the moment they really faced eternity, they made the disquieting discovery that within them there was really a never-broken point of contact with their Creator. And no matter what men have professed, no matter what their atheism has been, there comes a time—perhaps in the still night or perhaps before the lifeless body of some dear one—when they hear the inner voice, when they know their tremendous dependence upon the Cause that gave them life. 10

The development of character is coincident with the development of the soul. Sometimes in the most uncomely features and in the most out-of-the-way places, we see beauty of character. We see the light of the soul shining through the film of flesh that beggars those minor qualities we have encountered on the great highways and regarded as character. 11

And as the spirit-world studies us and watches us, we make no impression by our clothes or our station in life, by our forms or our bodily appearance. The spirit eyes look through that outer covering to the real self—the self as it stands revealed. 12

The world is full of false positions and false pride. The world has many false standards. Leaders come up in different lines, in different trades and professions and at the head of different countries. Human estimate of the one who leads is to regard that person with awe. Sometimes the most miserable characters are revealed beneath that outward appearance of position and power. When we look for character, we must set 13

aside all of the habiliments and station and position of the person.

- 14 At the same time, character is never content to grovel in the dust. Character begets progress. That progress may require some material accumulations, but most of all it requires the accumulations that belong to the soul.
- 15 It is true that through hysterical impulse or perhaps bodily ills, people may have premonitions and impulses that they think come from their souls. When they develop character—when they live in closer harmony with God's Law—when they are true to themselves and their Cause—then the genuine inspiration comes to them. A person may so entwine himself with material conditions that he does not interpret his soul impulses and Godly instincts properly. Only as he develops, only as he exercises the powers that are in reality his, only as he obeys what he instinctively knows is right, does he uncover himself as he is; and then his Godly instincts become stronger, his soul voice becomes louder and unmistakable. He no longer fears that the admonitions that come may be due to bodily conditions or to false impressions.
- 16 Often we encounter things that we believe we understand. Frequently we think we are right when we are in possession of only part of the facts. Only as we develop do we make use of the real powers that God gave us.
- 17 To gain a smattering of the truths that the spirit-world brings to us, and then suddenly become imbued with the idea that we are superior—that we are in possession of all knowledge—is a pitiful interpretation of the facts. Sometimes we encounter very ignorant persons to whom has been revealed the truth of Spiritualism. Without any effort to develop, entirely wrapped up in the mystery of the phenomena, falsely believing that they are on intimate terms with God—these persons immediately begin to regard themselves as superior to the thousands who are further along life's highway than they.
- 18 In the different churches and temples throughout the world, we often find men and women nearer to their Godly instincts

than many who profess Spiritualism as their creed. We find teachers and professional people and artists vastly more talented than many who claim superiority because they believe in Spiritualism. We find people with strong, beautiful characters who do not know that there is such a thing as communication.

It is a duty placed upon us to strive for the things we would possess, and to give greater use and value to that which God gave us. Unless we put forth the effort, unless we are fair in our dealings with our fellow-beings, unless we are willing to learn, no matter how long it takes, we have missed the purpose of the study of Spiritualism.

There are countless many who have done more in the world than we have, who better have earned the right to position, who have formed more dependable conceptions of the truths that we say we understand. This does not mean that we must abase ourselves and condemn ourselves and hold ourselves in utter contempt. It at least does mean that we should strive to come up to the standards we see on earth. Until we have reached those standards of character and development, how can we hope to attain a stage of development that would make us measure up to the spiritual conception of progress?

If we study Spiritualism with the idea that a casual reading and a little thought on the subject will give us superiority and knowledge and position and character, then we forget that before God gave us life, He was building a place for us. With all His great power, He took limitless millions and billions of years to prepare the way. If we can progress just a little during earth-life's course, we are moving in the right direction. If we can learn and master just a few little facts between the cradle and the grave, we have used properly the talents that God gave us when He sent us into life.

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PART IX

GUIDES AND GUIDANCE

No matter how much solace there may be in communicating with our spirit-friends, that communication is but an open door that permits us to learn the truths that the spirit-world brings to us.

- 1 Spirit guidance is infinitely more important than the mere knowledge of communication.
- 2 Guidance from the spirit-side of life is not a gift bestowed simply upon those who attend seances. The Indian who saw the Great Spirit in the fleecy clouds and heard God's voice in the rustling leaves and babbling brook, realized his guidance far more than many of the foremost Spiritualists of the world.
- 3 To each mortal, God sends guides. They come to help, to pilot us on toward our destinies, to save us from any condition that will thwart our destinies, and to leave to us certain decisions that are ours and that are necessary in our lives as free moral agents.
- 4 Man knows so little of the conditions under which he lives, has so restricted and narrow a vision, he would be impotent and lost without his guides. Some of our soundest thoughts that we believe are the products of our own brains, have been passed to us from the spirit-side. The achievements that we imagine are traceable solely to our own great ability, have been aided and promoted by our friends in spirit.
- 5 These guides deprive us of none of the responsibility that is ours. They see us as stumbling, mistaken children groping our way through the dark. Without their assistance, we would never extricate ourselves from the tight places into which our own error has led us. Without this guidance, we

would not feel the warmth of reassurance stealing upon us when we are in the hours of our greatest distress. Without their help, we would be like rudderless ships in a stormy sea—we would be like mariners without chart or compass, drifting wherever the winds and the tides and the currents might take us. We would be without our greatest inspirations. And worse than all else, we would often be shut off from our former experience through the long study and hard work of our life in spirit, and of our life upon the earth in previous incarnations.

The spirit-world is building our world, and out of our world the spirit-world is being built. 6

It is love, and duty to God, which is another expression of love, a higher expression, that brings our spirit guides to us. Night or day, sleeping or waking, wherever we may be, our invisible helpers—our silent partners—are by our sides. If we plan a journey, they are examining all of the conditions concerned with that journey. And if they find that we are going to travel into disaster before our time, they make something happen to retard us. They help us change our minds. They create new conditions that keep us from going. 7

Many a person has made a mistake in looking at the clock and in thinking he had read the time the clock did not indicate, and through that mistake has missed being at a certain place at a given time. Had he noted the time correctly, had he followed out his original plans, he may have walked into his death. He merely may have encountered some disagreeable experience that he did not need. 8

Occasionally—in very rare instances, indeed—we of the earth-world are made acquainted with this working out of some strange force that had saved us. But in most cases, we never know that we had been saved from anything. Very often the things we work the hardest to secure, are the rewards that are never ours. And sometimes the things that we think we desire the most, would prove to be the most harmful for us did we acquire them. (The trivialities, the little incidents 9

that usually do not attract our attention at the time, later prove to be the very turning points of our lives.

- 10 Spirit guidance goes much farther than simply saving us from shocks and disaster; indeed, it does not save us from either if they are necessary in our experience. But when our destinies are concerned, then the guidance of our spirit-friends becomes more potent than our own opinions and our own efforts.
- 11 Ignorant of Natural Law, woefully unacquainted with facts as they are, man is not equipped to pilot himself through life's storms. His opinions are more likely to be wrong than they are to be correct. His efforts are more likely to be in the wrong direction than they are to be in the right direction.
- 12 But beyond guidance itself is destiny. No individual was ever put into the world without a purpose. The moment God creates a living thing, He accepts the duty of a stewardship over the creature He has brought into being. But into the life of every one of His creatures, He places the burden of a responsibility. God did not place that responsibility upon the rocks and the trees, upon the water or the soil. To these inanimate objects, He gave no reason and no judgment, none of the properties that are common to our souls. And therefore, in the automatic operation of His Natural Law, He left to the inanimate things nothing that depended upon initiative. He made them blindly obedient. But man was given a certain choice of decision in order that he might learn through his experience.
- 13 To us, our guides are bringing strength and health and ambition. They are bringing out our better qualities. They are helping awaken within us our Godly instincts of right and wrong. They are helping us through our past experience, so that we may draw upon those powers when the right time comes and accomplish the work we are here to do.
- 14 With a broader vision, with a more intimate knowledge of Natural Law, with a more dependable conception of God—our guides can see what we do not behold, and feel what we

do not sense. But when they wish us to have a certain thing or do a certain thing, when they wish to change a judgment at which we have arrived, they never fail.

Our guides come to us free from selfishness. They never make a decision for us that they do not believe is for our benefit. They never permit us to go through an experience unless they know that we need that experience in our development. We often see only the momentary hardship, the humiliation, the loss; but to our spirit guides these things are like the plowing and harrowing of the soil so that the sound, healthy seed of achievement may be planted with assurance of its germinating growth and success.

When we do wrong, our guides in the spirit-world grieve. When we go contrary to our Godly instincts, our guides weep. When we overcome an obstacle, when we master an impediment in our characters, our guides rejoice. And when we call upon them for help, our appeal is a prayer. While they are our guides, they are God's Messengers. We pray to God and our guides hear our appeals.

When we pray from the heart, there is sincerity to our call for help. That assistance will not come, except occasionally, as a miracle. It comes naturally—logically. It is worked out in harmony with the laws and conditions and facts of our material existence. Thus, to our eyes there is nothing strange in the things that our guides have made us do. We change our opinions of people without any real reason. But we attribute that change of heart to our own breadth of soul. We alter our decisions and we think that the reason for that change was our own superior thought-force.

But some things we do on our own account. Some decisions are ours. Unless we can decide as free moral agents, how could we develop? Only by being held against the grindstone or the emery-wheel can the edge of the knife be sharpened. Only by contact with reality, and often by friction with harsh experience, do we learn some simple truth.

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- 19 How many men in the very flower of their success, when everything they touched seemed to turn to gold, have suddenly gone wrong in their judgment? Their wealth melted away like the fog before the rays of the sun. Where once they seemed to be infallible, they became unalterably wrong. Why should they receive and then lose that which was theirs? They had proved themselves unworthy of the trust that was placed in their hands. Perhaps the penalty was not for some offense committed recently. It may be a very old debt that could be paid only by rising to the heights of power and wealth, and then dropping to the depths of poverty and woe. But it is for the best. Everything that happens is for the best. In the ultimate reaches of progress, the present hardships become gems of experience and achievement.
- 20 The spirit-world never takes anything from us without keeping it in trust for us, ready to give it back when we have earned our right to possess it.
- 21 Sometimes when God calls a baby home, and the parents are torn with grief, there seems to be a rift in the dark clouds, and hope and comfort come stealing into their hearts. Our guides comfort us and support us and sustain us in our hours of grief and loss. They give us strength that we do not possess, because they know the flesh is weak, and through the covering of our material bodies conditions sometimes make very difficult the shining of the soul's rays.
- 22 We think that we are independent. We think that we have accomplished what was done for us. We think that we have power and position. But none of these things could we have without the assistance of those on the spirit-side.
- 23 And as our guides are messengers of God, so do we become the instruments of our guides. The more we strive to do what is right, the more we struggle to progress, the more we call upon them, the wider the door is opened and the better instruments we become.
- 24 Even the most expert workman will achieve indifferent results if his tools are inferior. Only as he has the best tools

can he do his best work. And as we become better instruments for our guides, we accomplish better results. Through us our guides live earth-experience. As we gain, they gain. But they can gain nothing in guiding us except in accordance with our achievements. And they often lead us to the point where we are better qualified to make a decision. Frequently, they open the way for us so that our vision will be clearer and so that we may listen to the Godly instincts within us and decide aright.

And to each of us, without respect to the number of our guides, is given a guardian angel. This guardian watches over our destiny, and as we need guidance, those guides are brought to us. Some of our spirit guides are with us a part of every day between birth and death. Others come only for the period of a certain experience, and when they have guided us past that stage of our journey, their work with us is done.

In each band of guides there are twelve. Some persons have less than a band and some have a number of bands, depending upon that person's work and sometimes upon his need of guidance.

The names of many of these guides we would not recognize if we heard them. Some are our dear ones who have gone before. Many of those we lose along life's trail join our band. But if we could return to the experiences we have had in spirit—provided this is not our first life-journey—then we would recognize the guides whose names and personalities were unfamiliar to us in the flesh.

While we think that we are alone, let us not forget that everything we do is seen by some of our guides, everything we say is heard by some of our guides, and whatever we think is just as real to our guides as our spoken words. Wherever we go, whatever we do, though we travel to the ends of the earth, our guides are with us. They watch us in our sleep and they watch us in our waking hours. Often they are more intimately acquainted with the facts of our business than we are.

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- 29 The writer from whose lips pour the words of his diction, from whose pen flows the words of his inspiration, may not realize the things he says, and the selection of his words is being given to him by friends in spirit.
- 30 And just as we have specialists in this world, so are there specialists in the spirit-world. The spirit who is an accomplished musician, would not come to guide the inventor or the mechanic. The spirit whose experience has been along scientific lines, would not come to guide the housewife. Our guides are given to us in accordance with our merits and our needs. And sometimes we are receiving very wonderful guidance from those who were among the earth's greatest. And we may go the entire route from the cradle to the grave without once realizing that the things we thought were ours, were really given to us, that we were helped to rise again each time we stumbled, and that courage that came to us out of the blue depths of despair, was transmitted to us from the spirit-side.
- 31 We are not qualified to judge life or its purposes. We complain bitterly very often about some hardship. We weep over some misfortune. But our guides see and understand why these things are so. What to us might be a crushing blow, to our guides may be a beautiful experience—a privilege that we should appreciate and that we shall appreciate when we enter the realm of clearer vision.
- 32 Persons who are psychic, who have a predisposition to sensing spiritual things, very often feel the unseen world around them with such strength that they are surprised that they can not see their friends in spirit. And sometimes a person will know that a departed loved one is near him, and yet he can not explain why he knows. He feels the personality. He feels the guiding touch. And many times an obdurate juror has altered his decision, when he had declared that he would never change his mind, without ever knowing that some beautiful spirit friend let the light of truth shine through that mortal's brain.

And thus, the closer we are to our guides, the more they can help us. The more we call upon them and ask them for help, the easier it is for them to assist. We open the door when we lean on our guides; but we should never lean without putting forth our own best efforts.

Our guides will not necessarily unlock prison doors and permit us to escape. They will not bring piles of gold and currency and lay them in our laps when we need money. To them, time is as the dawn. Our suffering may seem long continued, but our guides see and understand what lies beyond. They perceive the beautiful purpose back of every experience. And so, in accordance with the needs of the case, with the ultimate good and the ultimate object in view, they shape our ways.

At times they change their opinions. They may alter their method of guidance. Conditions may arise which they did not perceive at first. And so we find ourselves suddenly changing our opinions and perhaps making several different starts before we really begin a certain work.

There is a reason for all things, and there is certainly a reason for guidance. That reason is answered only by the Law of Love.

While our guides are picking out our footsteps, they also have guides in the higher spheres from whom they receive impressions and communications, and we of the earth have guides in the higher spheres who never come into intimate contact with us.

Life is a great chain. We are just links in that chain. It is all God's World and God's Work. And as each individual is being guided to higher progress and greater development, God's Work is being done. His Plan is being carried on, and that great Plan has back of it the never-varying principle of progress.

Egotism is a common fault. The very sense of being, the knowledge of individuality, seems to suggest a kind of su-

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periority that does not exist. We like to take credit for things that are not ours, and there are times when we like to believe that our judgment is better than our guides' judgment. We arrogate unto ourselves an importance we do not possess. But when we have run the mad course of our own 'wilfulness, when we have closed the door against spiritual guidance, we shall likely arrive at a period of more sober thought.

- 40 But when we call upon our guides, they are ready. Their patience and their love are beyond our understanding. They know our faults. They know every lie that is within our thoughts. They know every contemptible and mean thing we have done. The world may turn its back upon us, we may be nothing but outcasts upon the face of the globe; but even though we may be without the love and compassion of humanity, our guides do not leave us. They are true. They are faithful. There has never been a time when they could look upon us as anything but children of God. There has never been a time when they have judged us, because they know that since time began, God has never judged a soul.
- 41 Minds of men stagnate—they atrophy—they refuse to progress. They befoul themselves with the miserable conditions of their environments. And sometimes men and women will live for years without having made one jot of progress. They have wandered so far from the law of man and God, they seem to be beyond redemption. But when, in the earnestness of their hearts, they breathe a simple "God help me," their supplications are heard by the spirit-world and their guides are on hand to help them lift themselves out of the mire.
- 42 But there are men and women who are proud, who believe that their achievements are greater than the accomplishments of anyone else. In the period of their pride and self-importance, they hold in contempt the opinions of men and angels. For years they seem to succeed even under the stress and strain of their arrogance. But the day comes when they are brought to their knees, when they recognize what was in their hearts, and recognize it all at once. They call upon God and His Messengers. They ask for help. They desert their old views

of life and find consolation and satisfaction and hope only in the simple truth that never changes. They forget that their few years on earth are as naught compared with eternity. They overlook the fact that their life in the flesh is but an incident compared with the great life they will live in spirit. Sometimes they laugh at all things that refer to the other side of the grave. They ridicule God and religion. But in time, when they discover through harsh experience that their old methods are no good, that their old ideas are harmful, they look for something better and higher. Despite their overbearing arrogance, the moment they turn to God for help, their guides are there to assist them.

Very often mortals refuse to use the things that God has given to them. Sometimes we wonder why the person who spends freely always seems to have plenty to spend. As he gives out, he opens the way to receive. This does not refer to the spendthrift or the prodigal. It has reference to those of big ideas who realize that as they spend more, they are going to try to earn more. This applies not alone to money. The person who is always ready to help somebody else to find an opening that will enable that other person to help himself, who is giving out strength and force, discovers that in some way that may be mysterious to him, this power is being replenished.

The spirit-world does not expect us to crawl within our shells and live narrow and selfish lives. As we are glad to take someone else by the hand and help that unfortunate person over a stumbling block, so the spirit guide that is leading us can become stronger and assist us more. But when we become discontented and complain about our lot, we are shutting out our guides—we are barring the way of their assistance.

Constantly, the spirit-world is trying to teach us and train us. Our spirit-friends are thinking only of our good and our advancement. And in return, how many of us feel gratitude? Our spirit-friends can see what is right for us and what is harm-

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ful. They can discover what ambition is healthy and which ambition is diseased.

46 Sometimes in order to do our work, we need material success and it is brought to us. But unless we use that material success for a good and legitimate purpose, it will be taken from us. It does not lie within the necessary experience of all people to be wealthy or famous. The destinies of some on earth are measured by different standards. And so our guides seek to bring to us only those things which we need.

47 The man who is famished is not in position to make a meal of pastry. He must be nursed and nourished back to strength. And so we in our progress are not always in condition to profit by great achievement or great fame or high position. They may be foreign to our purpose on earth. We are satisfied only when we realize that we are living within the scope of our earth purpose, and then we are happy and thankful for that which our guides bring to us. We are thankful to God for what we have, and every time thanksgiving fills our hearts, we open the shutters and let the light shine through the windows and warm and cheer us.

48 No person ever came into this earth-world for the purpose of standing alone. Too often we forget that we are dependent upon other mortals. As we transact business, it must be with other people. We learn through the teachings of others.

49 Right here in this world—right in the flesh—we often have guides. And very often their counsel, their censure or their encouragement will prove just as helpful as guidance from the spirit-side. This may not be true in all things, but in many instances it is true. When we enter the spirit-world, we may come in ignorance and require the guidance of our spirit-friends just as much as we needed that guidance in the flesh. But if we refuse to develop, if we shut ourselves out from assistance, if we become filled with anger and meanness, we are not spiting our spirit guides; we are spiting ourselves. We are not going to retard the progress of the spirit-world or deprive a single spirit of his right to happiness.

We should be more concerned with helping ourselves than we could ever be with anything else. We should be very thankful for every point of progress that is ours. 50

To simply be told about guidance and its purpose, is one thing. To make that guidance real, and appreciate it, and feel its greatest benefits, is another thing. 51

In the thought of guidance from the spirit-world there is certainly nothing to cause hysteria or fear. We are guided whether we believe it or not. But when we understand guidance and its principles, then we are placed in position where we may experience its greatest benefits. The very fact that we are guided, that our spirit-friends come to help us along life's way, should be an inspiration to us to do our best at all times. Knowing that God has provided the way, that forces and powers are coming to us outside of those which we possess, we are sure to find a new inspiration in the thought of life, and we should form a new conception of the greatness and love of God. 52

As our ideals become loftier, as our purposes in life become higher, then we attract higher guides. The drunkard, the ne'er-do-well, the outcast could not be expected to attract guides that come to the sincere minister of the gospel or the conscientious workman in any line. Those people who aspire most to help the world, will have the greatest help in return. 53

In the spirit-spheres immediately adjoining earth conditions, there are spirits whose development is no greater than that of earth-folk and whose vision is about as restricted. And sometimes such guides can bring only strength. They can simply sustain the one they are helping without having an understanding of the ultimate result. 5

If a man frequents evil places, he will have companions of the same type. But when he reaches that period of riper decision and tries to make something of himself, his old companions do not follow him. He finds new companions—men and women with ambition. And as we progress through the various stages of our earth-experience and aspire to higher 55

and better things, we attract and have the benefit of more highly developed and experienced guides.

- 56 But from the spirit-world no evil ever comes. In those planes immediately associated with the earth-plane, there may be lack of development. There is no evil. But the higher we go and the farther we reach for the better things, the wider the doors open to higher experience and the stronger and better our guidance will be.
- 57 As we make effort, as we strive, even though we err, the spirit-world can work through us and with us. And as we join hearts and hands not only with our spirit guides, but with those right here on earth, we discover that progress is easier to attain.
- 58 Higher forces plan our duties and our destinies. Very often these duties and destinies are not of our own selection. They may be even contrary to our ambitions. And sometimes people go through life without really knowing why they are here. Often people attain an age of ripe maturity before they find themselves. But the experience they have gone through may have been fitting them to have a better grasp on that which they can really do.
- 59 In all things, there is goodness. Out of all things, goodness can come. Even the conniving and scheming and planning of those with evil purposes, may be turned by the spirit-world to good account to assist somebody else and even to work out the development of the evil-doer.
- 60 Each of us has a calling, a talent, a purpose. That talent may not be what we interpret in the terms of art. It may not be leadership or greatness. We may be here purely for our own development and not to leave any particular impress upon the earth-plane. We may be here just as a boy or a girl would go to school to master certain rudimentary lessons, and to prepare ourselves for greater work that some day will be ours. And sometimes, when we resent instances of what we call unusual and severe punishment, how can we say that out of that misery some great good is not coming? Good is

accomplished even when the punishment is severe, in order to open the eyes of those who otherwise refuse to see the good.

But in our earth-lives many things may occur that do not directly concern our destinies. There are certain cardinal principles of destiny. If we have a definite important work to do, then we shall not pass into spirit before our time has come. If we are here to do a certain work and refuse to do it, we shall come back and proceed with the completion of our unfinished tasks.

The things that we call very important in the world, may not be so important in the eyes of God. Men and women sometimes drop dead at their work and their earth-labor is left undone. Their estates are in a muddle. We say that they have been called at a most inopportune time, but the work God prescribed for them was completed. The reasons that brought them here have had their fulfilment.

This is not always true in the cases of suicide. A person may hasten his going, but he has left unfinished a duty that he can not escape. He may work it out in the spirit-world, or later he may return to the flesh. Even the soldier who meets death on the firing-line or in the hospital, has generally completed his earth-task. The schedule of destiny has called him to enter spirit-life. Even the child who is taken from the mortal-world may have required only that little touch of experience to round out the earth-schooling that was started ages ago.

We see but a small part of reality. We are not in position to judge until all of the facts are in our possession. When we realize that everything depends upon God, and that God will do nothing that is not ultimately good, we may find greater faith in our spirit guidance, greater comfort in our destiny and fewer pangs in our harsh experiences.

Spirit-life is a continuation of earth-life. The task that seems broken off here when death calls someone away, is a task that is continued—a work that is taken up immediately on the other side.

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- 66 It is merciful and necessary that we be barred from definite knowledge of our destiny and of harsh experiences that must come to us, in order to round out our development. We do not know what the morrow will bring forth. But we do know that if we have faith in God and faith in the spirit-world, then be that experience bitter or pleasant, it is carrying us forward to something better.
- 67 Very often the taxations upon one's faith are severe, and in our moments of pain and distress, we may turn away in disgust. In our weakness, we have denied that which our hearts tell us is true, but in time we shall come back. We may see even before the passing of many days or hours that what seemed to injure us so, contained a hidden blessing.
- 68 As we travel life's course, there may be many routes by which we may reach our destinies. The same results may be achieved through different experiences. As we move along life's highways and byways, the spirit-world sees how different results can be achieved in a variety of ways, and our guides select for us the paths that are best suited to our journey.
- 69 But there are people who come into the world with world-destinies, whose work goes far outside their own experience. But whether the task be mighty or small, no task is insignificant in the eyes of God and the spirit-world, and no mortal need be without guidance from the unseen spheres of life. As we make ourselves more worthy, our progress is greater. But at all times, in the hours of our triumph and in the moments of our pain and humiliation, we are never deserted. Help that is mightier and more beautiful by far than any help this world could give us, is always ours for the asking and the effort.

PART X

LIFE'S PLANES AND SPHERES

The principle of life itself does not differ in people be they
of the flesh or of the spirit. Life is life. It is all one great
life.

In life, there are different planes. The term "plane" used
by spirits might be better understood by many if it is called
stages of development.

There are planes of intellectuality. There is the illiterate
person and there is the highly educated person. From a
spiritual viewpoint, these two extremes may mean nothing in
contrast. Educationally, they are on different planes. Spirit-
ually, they might be on the same plane. The ignorant person
may be on a higher spiritual plane than the intellectual,
educated person. This is not a reassuring contemplation for
those who have struggled to fill their minds with learning.

The possession or lack of education does not necessarily
signify spirituality. But the educated person undoubtedly
has greater advantages of observing life in its different phases
on earth, and is usually more to blame for spiritual neglect,
than the ignorant person whose scope of knowledge and
experience has probably been limited.

On the other hand, many persons believe that they have
spiritual development when they are woefully lacking in that
type of progress. Many more claim to be spiritually developed
when, as a matter of fact, they are merely religious zealots
who, secretly or even openly, hate all those who disagree with
them.

There are many people who have attended countless seances
and who are familiar with the various phenomena of spirit

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manifestation, and yet who have no conception of spiritual development.

- 7 We can perhaps better understand the meaning of spiritual planes by making comparisons with the ordinary affairs of life with which we are in more intimate contact. Let us take the business world as an example.
- 8 We find a banker who has a very small and struggling banking institution. Another banker has a fairly successful small bank. And in successive stages, we find bankers at the heads of different institutions, from the smallest to the largest. If we make comparisons between these various banking houses, we might say that they are on different planes of financial achievement.
- 9 But perhaps the president of the very smallest institution is a capable man. He has gone to the limit of his capabilities in his own small community. He can do better things. He is competent to be at the head of a much larger organization. But before he can become president of a large and successful metropolitan banking house, he must go through various stages of experience. He must earn his way. Unless he gains recognition through what he does, he will remain a small-town banker. Step by step, he progresses. He becomes cashier of a banking house in a larger town. It is not a big bank, but perhaps it transacts business amounting to twenty times the volume of business done by the smaller bank. After many years of diligent work, study and honest effort, this man may become the head of a large bank in a good-sized city. He may continue to progress until he is one of the most widely known and respected bankers in the country.
- 10 He had within him a certain native ability. He had aspirations and ambitions. He was true to his desire to progress. He was on a much higher plane of banking ability than thousands of other bankers who were in his same position in the financial world in the beginning.
- 11 Sometimes we find that the man who is at the head of a very large metropolitan bank is adjudged unworthy of the

trust placed in him. Instead of being promoted, he is demoted. His plane of ability and sincerity is much lower than the position he occupied. This does not imply that mortals are sent through their earth-experience with no possibilities of advancement. People may get on higher planes commercially, socially and spiritually.

We are told that there are souls in the flesh who have developed spiritually to a degree that may be compared honestly with many in the spirit-spheres. We are also instructed that no limitations are placed upon the spiritual development of mortals, although this does not mean that the mortal who is developed very highly in a spiritual sense has the functions and the freedom of spirits discarnate. 12

As another illustration, let us take the very poor man, who lives in a small, dilapidated house, surrounded by dirt and poverty, back on some forlorn street. This man may be perfectly satisfied for years with his environments and his station in life. As he goes to and from his labor, he passes the homes of more prosperous persons. Finally a dissatisfaction arises within him. He does not resent the fact that other people possess more property and are more successful than he. He aspires to better his own condition in life. He analyzes himself. He realizes that his ability and knowledge are limited. He knows that he must study something useful and become more proficient so that his earnings will be greater. He consults others who have arisen higher in the scale of achievement than he. And though it may be very difficult work, he studies patiently and faithfully. He becomes a better workman. Instead of depending solely upon his muscular effort, he learns how to operate some machine. And in a few years from the time his ambition awakened, he is making twice as much money as he made before. Then he is in position to move out of the old, deplorable conditions into a better house in a different neighborhood. It may still be a poor part of town, but the neighbors of this man believe in cleanliness and honest effort. Instead of permitting rubbish and weeds to litter and disfigure their yards, they have trees and flower-beds and vegetable gardens. 13

- 14 If this man's ambitions have been satisfied, then he will remain on the plane to which he has climbed. But again he may find the call of a stronger ambition. He believes that his family and he are entitled to just as much as they can earn honestly. He pursues his studies. He loves his work and seizes every opportunity to improve himself. He becomes valuable to his employer, and in a few more years, he is the superintendent of the shop. His earnings are now sufficient to enable him to purchase a home, although he may divide his payments into terms of many years. He has moved into a better neighborhood. He is in a more enviable position in life, but he has earned all of it. He did not make it in one step—he may have struggled for ten years—but he has succeeded.
- 15 As the years pass, this man continues to study and to put forth his best efforts, and his employer gives him an opportunity of becoming one of the owners of the business. It may be twenty-five or thirty years from the time this laborer started to climb before he has reached the position where he owns a beautiful home and has an income sufficient to give him a large surplus.
- 16 Others, who were fellow-laborers in the early days of this man's struggles, never believed that there was anything better in life for them. They may have felt the same degree of dissatisfaction that this man felt, but they expressed their dissatisfaction in resentment against those who had done better.
- 17 Life's story is filled with examples of men and women who started in ignorance and poverty, and who studied and struggled and gained the highest places in the commercial world. Their progress was not marked by one step. They did not leap from failure to success. It was what they did and thought every day. They planned, and they carried out their plans. And as their spirit-friends saw them struggle, the door was opened wider. The more they succeeded, the easier it was to succeed.

And many, in gaining this material progress, also gained broader views of life. Having suffered poverty, they felt compassion for the poor. Having worked through their own might from illiteracy to education, from hardship to achievement, they realized that as people help themselves they will be helped. They accepted responsibility. They were willing to take upon themselves the duty of their own advancement.

But if we paused here, is it not possible that we might feel that development that takes us to a higher plane in life means merely the acquisition of more wealth and a greater station in life's affairs? This would be the wrong conception.

Let us now take an example of a purely intellectual nature.

Here is a man who was obliged to go to work as a young boy, and whose schooling was very elemental. This man was taught to read and write, but his vocabulary is very limited. He is poor at figures. He is unfamiliar with the studies that are pursued by the children of his neighborhood. But after a time, there is awakened in this man a hunger for knowledge. He is obliged to earn his living and take care of a growing family. He can not stop in his labors and go to school. But the municipality provides night-schools for just such persons, and this big, brawny fellow occupies a desk alongside a boy of fourteen. All around him in that school-room at night there are many evidences of the struggles and ambitions of men and women in this poor fellow's position and condition of life. While the son of a millionaire is away at college squandering money and energy and his moral forces, this poor fellow is pursuing knowledge because he loves to learn. And everything he studies, he drinks in with his entire soul.

Viewed from the point of each day's progress, this workman does not seem to learn very much. But he is faithful to his ambition; and, as the years pass, he goes from one grade to another. Where he was able to read and write only in a limited way, he finally completes a high-school education. He has a grasp on his own language, and perhaps he has learned other languages as well.

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- 22 And then he begins to study law. He starts in at the foundation once more, but it is a foundation on a much higher plane than that which he occupied previously. More years pass, and finally this man takes the law examinations and is admitted to practise at the bar. His first clients are those who knew him at night-school and at his labors. They come to him because they have seen him fight his way to success and they look up to him. In their estimation, he is a great man. These former friends and neighbors use this man as an example to instill ambition in their children.
- 23 Years pass and the clientele of this lawyer becomes larger and more important. Some corporations pay him ten times as much in annual retainers as his total gross income amounted to in the beginning. He is entrusted with important cases and he wins them. Back of all his progress, there is rugged honesty. He is not simply a shrewd lawyer, but he has made himself big in intellect and big in ideals. He becomes a judge, and perhaps later on governor of his state; and, maybe in his advanced years, a titanic figure in the country's affairs.
- There have been many actual cases in life's story that correspond with this one.
- 24 Here we find a man who has reached a very high plane of intellectuality. God gave him the equipment. God provided the means of his advancement. He improved that which came to him as a gift from his Creator.
- 25 On the contrary, many men have struggled just as this lawyer struggled, but as they gained position and fame and wealth, they stooped to the very depths of low intrigue. As they advanced in the scale of world success, they found themselves on a lower spiritual plane at life's end than that which they occupied during the dawn of their ambition.
- 26 And so the artist, the musician, any one of any capabilities in life, any one of even mediocre ability, may reach higher planes of success through study and work. But there, too often, life's standards end so far as the earth is concerned.

If we look around and about us, we make the discovery that God has different standards of achievement. We may see the mighty jurist drop dead while he is handing down an important decision. The life passes out of the business man while he is at his desk. The work that was started seems to be uncompleted. Perhaps, after all, the work and the position were not as important as mankind thinks.

Planes of spiritual development might at times coincide with material achievement. In other cases, spiritual advancement might be held in abeyance for material gain.

Too frequently the world regards the term "spiritual progress" as meaning a long face, upturned eyes, detestable hypocrisy and an inclination to force one's views of religion on everybody else. This has no more to do with spiritual progress than playing a character on the stage has to do with the real personality of the actor.

The sincere person pretends little. Unless his chosen avocation is that of preaching, he preaches little. Being a minister of the gospel may indicate sincerity of purpose or it may mean hypocrisy. The state of being a minister of the gospel is neither an endorsement nor a reason for condemnation.

Real spirituality does not find the necessity of proclaiming itself. People are not good because they claim to be good. They do not occupy a high spiritual plane because they decide that they are so important in God's affairs, they could not possibly occupy a lower plane.

It is not necessary for a person to believe in Spiritualism to develop spiritually. It is not necessary to be a member of any church organization to develop spiritually. But being a believer of any particular creed or a member of any religious body, should not be regarded simply as a mask or as a convenience of pretense. Going to church does not make one spiritual unless one goes for spiritual purposes. If one goes only for form and appearance or as a shortcut to business achievement, there is certainly no spiritual advancement in one's presence in a church or a temple or a seance-room.

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- 33 Man often judges by outward conditions, but God judges not at all. God knows the heart of every one of His creatures. And He knows that His Natural Law will reward in accordance with merit.
- 34 Too frequently, religious hysteria is misinterpreted as spiritual advancement. A person may go insane on the subject of religion. But if he viewed life's philosophy properly, his mental trend would certainly be toward sound views and normal actions.
- 35 In different fabrics and materials, we find different qualities. Some kinds of wood are stronger and more beautiful than other kinds. Some cloth is very coarse and of poor material, and other cloth is very fine and of good material. Quality ranges from its negative forms to its highest positive forms. And there is quality in spiritual advancement that is quite as pronounced as the different grades of quality in any class of materials. The wood can not change its texture. The cloth can not change its weave. Man may change his spiritual station in life because, of all evolution, the evolution of spiritual advancement is the most wonderful and most beautiful.
- 36 Spiritual planes are determined not by opinion. They are not determined by an acquisition of knowledge regarding spiritual things. They are decided within each person. They are determined not by what that person has learned and crammed into his mind, but in accordance with his actual beliefs and his sincere efforts to live up to that which he believes.
- 37 The pretender makes a great ado over every little act of goodness he has performed. Even when he pays an honest debt, he likes to prate about it in public. If he contributes to a good cause, he tells about it. He does not trust his own soul to unfold itself as it is given these opportunities of expressing its reality. But he who develops sincerely, makes no commotion about his goodness. Even in the quiet places where no one will see, so far as earthly eyes are concerned, this man or woman, who is actually developing, will try to

do what is right because it is right—because it is in harmony with Natural Law.

Development, therefore, is a matter of sound sense. If people do good only because they hope to receive a reward, or avoid doing evil merely because they fear punishment, then they are creatures of convenience. In reality, they are cowards. They feel little of the love of God, but they fill themselves with fear of God. But the person who learns either from instruction or because he has sought the knowledge within himself, realizes that there are certain conducts of thought and deed that accord with Natural Law; which, after all, means the pathway that God has given all of us to guide us aright.

The very fact that God has made Natural Law, proves that right progress is in harmony with it, and that whatever runs contrary to Natural Law is an infringement that must be punished. But the punishment itself is not the old conception of punishment. It is correction. It is teaching through experience that there is only one right way.

The person who pursues spiritual things while in the flesh, and ignores the body, has seen only a glint of part of the truth of God's Law. The person who progresses selfishly, and at the expense of others, has formed the wrong conception of spirituality. And the emotional person who forces assistance upon others and makes them leaners, thereby retarding their development, has gained another wrong conception of God's Law.

It is true that there may be a sort of passing comfort to a person who believes in an orthodox heaven and an orthodox hell—in orthodox good and orthodox evil. That person would condemn his fellow mortal who attended theatrical productions or balls. He would condemn his neighbor who utilized his Sundays for recreation, for a relief period from the hard labors of the week. And if we ask this dogmatically religious individual the status of those whom he condemned, this fanatic would at once relegate his neighbors and friends

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to hell. Instead of taking that zealot's conception of religion as evidence of spiritual development, we could better employ it as an example of what not to do in seeking a higher spiritual plane.

- 42 God gave every person an instinctive and intuitive knowledge of right and wrong. Too often that Godly instinct is buried under the debris of false conceptions and wild theories. Unless we can look upon the world through eyes of fairness—unless we can stand on our own feet and look after our' own progress honestly—we have missed the beauty of life and the purpose of life.
- 43 Here and there, and often in the out-of-the-way places, unheralded and unsung, we find beautiful characters. They are slow to pass judgment. They refuse to condemn or gossip about their neighbors. They do not accept newspaper attacks upon the character of people as *prima facie* evidence of their guilt. These people go about their duties with love in their hearts. They do their best. Their best may not be nearly so good and great in the scale of achievement as even the indifferent efforts of some others, but it is their best. They are honest in their dealings, but they do not permit anybody to ride over them rough-shod. They defend their rights, but they refuse to go outside of their rights even in a transaction with strangers. They are willing to help and they have compassion for those in distress.
- 44 Some of these persons may get down on their bended knees at night and pray. But their real prayers are those that they are sending out in their work well done, in their sincere efforts to live as they should—physically, morally and spiritually. They are never swept by storms of theoretical revolution. Their faith is simple, and they are thankful not only for their blessings, but for their experiences, be they agreeable or harsh.
- 45 And so they go down life's trail never doubting God or the goodness of God, never feeling that the world has retrogressed or that other people have no right here. They can see beauty

in God's sky and God's clouds, in His earth and His foliage and His creatures; and they glory in the success of others.

And when we find such persons, we usually discover that to their doors there are frequent pilgrimages of those who are downhearted, of those who wish honest advice. When these people pass from the earth, there are scores and hundreds who mourn their going. They may have left considerable of this world's goods, and they may have died poor. They may have needed material success for their own achievements, or they may have regarded the acquisition of wealth as of no particular consequence. But when they go their way, every one who knew them—even those who condemned them—will admit, either openly or secretly, that if there was ever a reward honestly earned those persons have gone to receive it.

The individual who continuously is congratulating himself upon his spiritual development, is probably developing very little, if any. The one who really develops is regarding each step of progress as his duty. He is happy to do his duty. He may have very little of the philosophy of life. He may not be able to put words together in a musical manner. Perhaps he can make no fine speeches. He is not an orator or a philosopher. But he does his best because he is glad to do it. He knows that God gave him the opportunity and that he owes to himself the duty of doing the best he can, and of trying to improve upon what he did yesterday.

God does not ask us to accept a big hundred per cent. standard of spiritual achievement as our measure for development during a particular period. He has not commanded us to become perfect. The spirit-world does not expect us to become perfect, because if we were perfect, it would be necessary to find higher expressions of life. We can not make a chart and say that one person has developed spiritually ten per cent. and another twenty per cent. and another fifty per cent. and another ninety-eight per cent. We can not say that any one person is the most highly developed spiritually on earth, nor have we any right to say that a person has no

spiritual development, because we do not know all of the facts—we can not judge.

49 There are various beliefs and various conceptions. Spiritual development is not necessarily along one certain path. There may be many parallel roads converging at the same point.

50 We find that there are planes of knowledge and planes of social standing and planes of commercial achievement. And we find also that people may be on high planes of spiritual development without respect to their progress in other directions, but that intellectual, material and social progress might be coincident with spiritual advancement.

51 If we condemn the rich man because he is rich or sneer at the poor man because he is poor, we have missed the lesson of advancement. If we are filled with resentment and envy and covetousness, we are lacking in development. If we have hatred for any person who has won success, we are not looking enough within ourselves—we are not attending sufficiently to our own achievement and spiritual development—or we would find no inclination to criticize and condemn or to feel the pangs of jealous hatred. If we are true to our earth-lives and our earth-duties, we are very likely to be true to others, to the world, exactly as we are to our spiritual selves.

The illustrations that have been given in this discussion of planes have dealt principally with our earthly affairs. It should be of some concern to us to take into consideration our state of being after the change called death. If we think that we live a long time here, how about eternity?

52 The messages and teachings that come from the spirit-world inform us, among other important things, that there are numerous planes of development in spirit. As the spirits progress, as they gain higher estate, they find new sources of knowledge—new breadths of understanding—opening for them.

53 As far back as the memory of the spirit-world runs, there has been no one who has attained the ultimate of knowledge, because that alone belongs to God. No matter how far one

may progress in the spirit-world, there are still new vistas of progress to be traversed—there are new lessons to be learned.

Apparently, it takes a very long time to grasp even a few of the rudiments of life's knowledge. Aspiring to know, does not mean knowledge. Having ambitions to attain, does not mean attainment.

The universe is a composite of infinite and intricate details. Our finest conceptions of details are very crude compared with the lessons of details supplied by Nature. It requires a long time to learn the operation of any Natural Law. But even when that much knowledge has been gained, what conception does one have beyond the simple recognition of processes? Can we say that anything is learned unless it really becomes part of our intellectual and spiritual weave?

The person who really knows a Natural Law strives to live in harmony with it. Without that effort to live according to Natural Law, who has the right to say that he has knowledge of that Law? And to understand the truth of spiritual development—to have a grasp of its meaning—is to be so filled with the understanding of it as to find no satisfaction in any other kind of life, except that life which is in harmony with the law of progress.

Throughout life on the earth, we find countless persons who resent the spiritual advancement of others, just as we find countless others who are filled with hatred over the contemplation of the material achievements of their fellows.

If you were to go into the poorest tenement district of a great city, where you would find families cold, hungry, dirty, ragged and woefully ignorant, you might be filled with compassion to help those persons. But suppose you took one of those families to a beautiful palace where all of the furnishings were rich and costly, where the food was of the highest quality, where there were servants to do their bidding. Would you expect that poor, ignorant family to suddenly be tuned up to these better things? After the novelty wore away, those people would be miserable. They would want to go back to their

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hovel, their filth, their squalor, their poverty. If they were permitted to invite friends to call upon them, they would invite those whom they knew in the tenement section of the city.

- 59 But if those poor people aspired to better things, and through long and continuous hard effort finally earned their way to that palace, they would be in accord with its conditions, because they would have reached out for them and earned them. They would have progressed plane by plane, stage by stage, step at a time. They would have been happy only as they earned their way.
- 60 Spiritual development, like education, like anything else, can not be bestowed upon people. The very poor man who is made heir to a great fortune, perhaps finds that fortune a penalty—a source of misery.
- 61 But let us not forget that those who are on lower planes of development, glory in pulling the more advanced individuals down to their level. We sometimes feel that we must make our progress in groups. We believe that our friends and companions must come along with us. If they do not elect to follow us, are we going to stay with them? The drunkard realizes the futility of his debauchery. He decides to be done with liquor and to make something of himself. Do his friends come along with him, or must he find new companions in the better life he seeks?
- 62 There are always persons who glory, who revel, in any published report or any rumor, be it true or false, that tells of some fallen leader. They are happy to know that some minister of the gospel has done wrong and has been detected. And so they set up a slogan that constitutes their own alibi. They say that the wrong-doer is the one who is caught, while the others escape. They make standards of life that will excuse themselves. They insist that they are as good, are as highly developed, as anybody else. They resent any inference that they should make something better out of themselves. They rebuke the person who tries to lead them out of their miserable condition.

The criminal who has served his term, is very likely to once more seek the haunts where he learned his crime. He may say that the difference between him and the ruler of the nation is simply a difference of opportunity. He may be right, but the chances are that he is wrong. He laughs at any one who is seeking to become better and to live a more decent life.

But the person who progresses spiritually, who is determined to climb life's ladder, will find that old companions will follow and mock only a short distance. They will not venture far from their lairs. As one progresses in any direction, be it material or spiritual, be it intellectual or social, one will often find that slurs and contemptuous remarks are directed one's way by those who are left behind. But unto each of us belongs the duty of our own individual progress.

The spirit-world tells us that life on all planes is much alike. Environments and conditions may be different. Functions may be different. The individuality and the personality are the same. The spirit out of the flesh is the same person that he was in the flesh. He remembers all of his experiences as something continuous, even though he recognizes the change that has taken place.

Upon the spirit rests the same duty of progress that is imposed upon the mortal. It is a matter of personal responsibility with the spirit in arriving at higher planes of development. In the less incumbered conditions of spirit-life, the mind is clearer and certain intuitive knowledge is more readily understood. But for all that, there are planes of mortal development that are comparable with some of the planes of development in spirit.

If we get the right understanding of the real meaning of planes—if we accept the spiritual interpretation of planes as implying stages of spiritual development—then we are no longer confused by regarding purely material progress as being what the spirit-world calls development.

But these types relative to development itself are treated separately in another part of this volume. It would be inad-

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visible to read the part on development and progress without a clear conception of planes.

- 68 Whatever pertains to a knowledge of things spiritual, and particularly to a desire to work out these teachings, must also have special bearing on a knowledge of planes and a knowledge of experience and development. The more interest we take in our work, the greater the desire we have to better ourselves and to become higher-principled; the more certain we may be that we are moving ahead, no matter how slowly, toward higher planes.
- 69 Those in spirit never feel flattered when we refer to them as learned. They appreciate better than we how much there is to learn, and how little any of us has learned.
- 70 If we look around us and make comparisons, we find many in our own lines of endeavor who have become more skilled, more proficient, more learned in those lines. The day-laborer regards the college professor as a paragon of wisdom, because that teacher knows much more than the laborer. But the professor, if he is not egotistical, if he is progressing because he loves his work and his study, knows of some scientist in his line or some master of his branch of study, who seems farther above the professor than that teacher appears above the laborer. And the leader up to whom the teacher looks as a standard of wisdom and achievement, probably has attained that point in his progress where he appreciates how little he knows in comparison with the knowledge that may be his if he strives for it.
- 71 Those in spirit, who can perceive facts more clearly than mortals could possibly perceive them, have the ever-present example of more highly developed spirits whose learning has far outstripped the knowledge of the others.
- 72 And in this manner, throughout the broad expanse of life, we shall find always new examples of greater knowledge that lies beyond. We shall find new expressions of achievement. And the more we learn, the more fully we must appreciate that what we have mastered is limited in comparison to what

we may master if we strive continuously. But if we think at any stage of our progress, we have reached the highest point we have any right to reach, or if we believe that we have gained a position that satisfies us perfectly, that is evidence that we really are not making further progress.

The goal of development that individuals must reach, is to be found in the future—not immediately following death, but maybe in a distance that can be answered only by countless ages of study and effort. 73

Eternity means never-ending time. But throughout eternity, the spirit-world expects us still to be learning new truths. Why should we be satisfied in our spiritual development simply because we have made commendable gains during a period of a few years or even of an earth-lifetime? 74

Often we think we have developed when our development has been small. Perhaps we still cling to some error, to some little disagreeable trait or habit. The persistence of that habit or error will not go with us as we develop. It does not belong in a higher plane of progress. 75

A realization of these facts should not fill us with discouragement. We can not reach the higher planes unless we strive earnestly to attain them. We can not climb the mountain without effort. Whatever we do calls for an expenditure of energy, and often that energy is really greater than we might require if we were doing things properly. And the expenditure of physical energy that we devote to worry and doubt and lack of faith and hatred and jealousy, might be a needless waste. 76

In thinking wrong and harmful thoughts, we are retarding ourselves just as much as though we were performing injurious deeds. A man might be very clean physically. He might be honest. In all his dealings with others, he might be scrupulous. But in his thoughts, he might be unclean. Without any outward evidence, he might hate his enemies and plot against them while not actually attempting to carry out his designs. His own estimate of himself might be that he is on a very high plane of development. But were he in 77

this exalted position, he would not entertain thoughts of that destructive nature.

78 The Law of Compensation will reveal to us a great many interesting and important facts relative to that. And there is a further special consideration to thought and memory contained in this volume. We refer to thought here as being in harmony with the question of the plane we occupy and the planes we hope to attain.

79 We know of numerous examples of men who started on criminal careers and who later became honest and successful business or professional men, and who did much good in the world. They never progressed one step without watching their thoughts.

80 There is one form of hypocrisy that pertains to pretending to be what we are not, and this is measured by our deeds and by our expression of opinion. There is another form of hypocrisy that may never be detected by earth-friends. It is detected immediately by those in spirit. This relates to our inner selves—our real selves. We may think unclean and harmful thoughts without expressing them, but their reality is not diminished simply because we have not put them into action.

81 We know that the baby does not reach maturity in a few days. Cell by cell, its body is built up. It learns just a little each day. Many years must speed away before that child has reached maturity and is doing his or her work. We think that the progress of that infant is very slow. Sometimes, we call a child backward because it does not grasp readily the new facts that are placed before it. What right have we to criticize a child or to refer to a baby's development as slow? While many mature people have stagnated, are standing still on life's highway, helpless babies are coming into the world and by slow, measured processes are growing to maturity and learning to do their work, and soon far pass the older persons in actual development. They reach higher planes. They become more useful members of the mortal family.

Any dwarfish tendency of mortal mind is an anchor that holds the person to a lower plane. The contrary habits of thought and disposition, the willingness and anxiety to judge others, the readiness with which too many of us find alibis to explain away our shortcomings, are stumbling-blocks that must be overcome.

What we do to reach higher planes, in a spiritual sense, must be done in the secret of our own lives. It is not what we advertise ourselves to be that counts; it is what we really are. And we are not on a high plane one hour of the day and a low plane another hour. Our march is slow, and it depends upon our thoughts and our deeds, our attitude toward others and toward ourselves. But we are the ones who profit most. We are not doing that work for somebody else; we are doing it for ourselves.

Earth-life is much like a flower that buds and blossoms and gives out its fragrance. But the flower becomes a blossom and then a bloom within a few hours or a few days, and the most meagre progress of individuals may require years and maybe centuries in the flesh and in spirit.

We know that as we progress in any line of business or art, we gain finer inner conceptions that we can not put down on paper and bind into books. The great musician has a technique that others realize as superior. That development has been attained through long periods of study and practice, not simply in the flesh but in spirit as well. The mechanic has an inner knowledge of his trade that makes him a master. The great surgeon has an intuitive sense that places him in his own class among his fraternity. The helmsman of a mighty ship can pilot it through narrow channels that would only mean ruination and wreckage if most other pilots were in charge. In the affairs of life, we see ample evidence of the result of this long and careful development.

In like manner, spiritual development occurs. Finer perceptions of truth come to those who seek earnestly to gain higher planes. It is an individual matter. Any book of

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instructions is like a chart. It can deal only with fundamental facts. If it can suggest to the minds of those who read it the use of the inner, deeper qualities of the soul, then it assists those persons. But no book can take any individual life and analyze it. The best we can do, when we go searching for knowledge, is to learn the fundamentals—to learn the rules. But the application of those rules belongs to us.

87 It may be that the plane of a person in this world has been predetermined by the Law of Compensation—by the principles of reincarnation. Perhaps the individual, whom we regard as retarded and slow of development, may be rounding out a necessary experience that must be mastered in order to equip that person for a higher plane in the spirit-world.

88 Earth-life is a segment of the great life; and unless we consider what came before and what comes after, we sometimes misjudge. We may misjudge ourselves. We wonder sometimes why a person will commit burglary or murder or some other crime. Perhaps that individual will never reach a higher plane of development until hard knocks and suffering and imprisonment have taught him what he has refused to learn through gentler methods. Upon entering the spirit-world, he may come back with accounts pretty well balanced. He may really be more qualified to proceed with his development than some of the morally good but very narrow and egotistical.

89 The spirit-world brings us information about the relationships between life in the flesh and life in spirit. Realizing at all times that there are not two lives, but just one life—that there are not two worlds, but just one world—we may be able to discern the reason why certain efforts in this world seem unrewarded and why lack of effort often seems rewarded. But each of us has a large and important occupation in attending to the matters of his own progress, in reaching higher planes of development through his own individual effort.

90 It is easy enough for any person to bring up questions regarding spiritual planes without having them answered properly. We are not living the lives of other people, and we

do not know all of the conditions pertaining to those others. But do we know much about the conditions that relate to ourselves? If we aspire sincerely and continuously to attain higher planes of spiritual growth, then we are very likely to put forth the necessary efforts and think the right kind of thoughts to help us reach those planes.

The spirit-world tells us that it is possible to attain nearly any plane of development on this earth that could be reached in spirit. The way is open. A few individuals may have progressed to that point. It is unlikely that any one of our personal acquaintances can be classed among that number. 91

Unto each plane of life belongs an appreciation of the knowledge and facts pertaining to that plane. We are not in spirit. We are in the flesh. We have earth-bodies and not spirit-bodies. We have earth-environments. Our sensations and our perceptions are attuned to earth-conditions. This explains why we can not understand what the spirit-world looks like or the conditions under which spirit-life proceeds. It explains why the person on one plane may not have the right kind of sympathy for or appreciation of a person on another plane. 92

These planes in life do not rob or give to any person so far as the relationship of that individual to God is concerned. Every person in time may develop to what any other individual possesses. We must not forget the time-element or the effort or energy or sincerity involved. 93

Many of the gifts that we call talents in this world are possessed in common by those in spirit. Music and art belong to many in the spirit-world. They are more proficient in the exercise of their gifts than we, because they are less encumbered. But there is still a great variety of individual accomplishments in the spirit-world. 94

Remembering that plane upon plane reaches above us here and in the future, in the flesh and beyond the grave, we must not form the conception that everybody in spirit has the same development. All of them perceive certain truths in common. 95

But perceiving a truth and working it out—actually living it—
are different things.

- 96 The babies and children from the earth-plane who enter spirit, have opportunities of more rapid progress than they had in the world in which we live.
- 97 But sometimes, progress in spirit has its real beginning in harsh earth experiences. Why should we be so narrow when each one of us has so much to do on his own account? We can never gain a higher plane through voting ourselves into that position. We can not develop simply through wishing to develop. We do not know how difficult has been the task or how hard the time of some poor mortal whom we refer to as undeveloped.
- 98 We perceive truths from different angles. The same thing may be told to us in twenty different ways, and only when we have heard the twentieth illustration do we grasp it. And so sometimes an experience may not impress us with its real lesson, and we may be obliged to go through it again before we learn what we must learn.
- 99 It is not a sign of development that we can discern imperfections in others. It is not a mark of progress because we can see some other person's faults. The higher the plane we occupy, the more charitable we are likely to be in our views of others.
- 100 The different religions represent different planes of spiritual growth or understanding. This does not mean that a certain creed is far down in the scale and some other creed high in the scale. We may perceive the same truth from different angles. There may be persons on every side of a mountain. While they all look at that mountain, each has a little different vision of it. So there may be many viewpoints taken from the position of different creeds. But while some who look through the eyes of one religion may perceive clearly, others gazing through the eyes of the same religion may see imperfectly.
- 101 There is often a great misconception of our duty to others. We can not lift one person from a lower plane to a higher

one. Sometimes to attempt to force that growth upon another, becomes a hardship to the one whom we seek to help. That person may have an entirely wrong impression of our intentions and may rightfully regard our efforts as unwarranted interference. The pig gets more satisfaction by having his food served in a trough than he could secure by attempting to eat at the table. People on a low plane do not want the conditions and truths of the higher plane, because they are not ready. They must make themselves ready. That is their task. And, too, through good and charitable intentions, we may keep giving money to somebody else and easing the way for that person, when the thing he must have will be found only in his own efforts and in his own hard knocks. Only as he goes through the experience, will he be ready to develop.

Many of these points we shall present again from different angles in conjunction with Experience and Development and in some of the other parts of this volume. But let us grasp the significance of these truths as they pertain to planes of spiritual growth.

Opinions of others may be very adverse. We might be 102 criticized for what we believe. Listening to that criticism, catering to the praises of others, is no sign of progress. It is often a mark of retrogression. That criticism and that condemnation that may be heaped upon us signify very often that those who give voice to these opinions resent our efforts to reach a higher plane. Why argue with them? Why enter into a debate with them? It is easier and more reasonable to leave them alone and keep away from them. Why should we continuously place ourselves where the sharp points of unjust attacks should worry us? Traveling our own paths, attending to our own duties, looking after our own spiritual growth, is a task that will never end. But the farther we proceed, the easier it is to make still greater progress. It may require a longer and more severe struggle to get onto the plane next above our own than it will require to progress from that plane to the one farther up.

The pupil in school struggles for years to master certain 103 rudiments. He goes through elemental studies. Many of

these he must acquire in order to enable him to know the language of some higher subject. This pupil may devote ten or twelve years to preparatory study from the first grade to college. Then in four or five years, he learns twenty or thirty times what he knew before. He could not leave the second or third grade and enter college, because the terms and facts used in the higher studies would be unknown languages to him.

- 104 Retaining the knowledge we have gained through study and effort, and continuously reaching for greater knowledge, makes the higher progress more rapid and more certain. Striving to grow spiritually may result apparently in very little progress in the beginning, but as time passes we shall find that not one of these efforts was lost. We must not permit ourselves to be retarded by ignorance or criticism. If we do our best and do it persistently, and accept our harsh, sad experiences as essential elements in the education of ourselves, we may find that we are more willing to aspire to greater spiritual growth and to work accordingly.

SPHERES OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- 105 Just as the term plane, as it applies to spiritual growth, calls for considerable exemplification before its meaning is grasped, so may the term sphere be misunderstood. In one sense, we might regard a sphere as a planet, and in a spiritual sense a sphere might actually refer to a planet. That is a rather dangerous conception to form of spheres of spiritual development.
- 106 In a grammar school, there are different divisions or grades. In a high-school, there are different grades. In a college, there are different courses of study and different grades. Thus, in one sphere of spiritual development, there would be a number of planes of progress, and in another sphere there would be other planes.
- 107 In view of the fact that none of us in the flesh can form an accurate conception of anything that is described, in terms of our understanding, with relation to the spirit-world, it is

not necessary to attempt to say how many spheres there are or how many planes in each sphere. We doubt that such information would be of any assistance to us.

We know that there are many planes right in this sphere 108 of physical existence. Instead of calling this a world and thinking of it as having a certain circumference, a certain diameter and certain continents and oceans, let us think of it as a sphere of progress.

There are spheres in spirit that may be looked upon as just 109 as distinct as the different planets in our solar system. This does not imply that each is a long distance from another so far as miles go. The spirit-world does not calculate in the terms of miles or minutes, but in the language of progress.

We are told, as we have explained previously in this book, 110 that the spirit-world we are most familiar with is referred to as the third sphere, and sometimes as Summerland or Homeland.

Persons of very restricted spiritual development and of very 111 pernicious natures, likely see only the first sphere when they enter spirit. And we have reasons for believing that they see nothing that we do not see, although they may realize that they are living under changed conditions. When they have progressed through study, through learning, through effort—which may be a matter of a short time or of a considerable period, perhaps of years—they enter the second sphere. We are not prepared to say that they take a journey to some distant plane. We do not know but what there has occurred a change in them, according to their understanding, that makes visible to them a world they have previously passed through and did not see. And we do not know but that progress from one spiritual sphere to another may be made in like manner.

Each sphere looks different. It has its own scenery. As it 112 is upward in the scale, it is more beautiful. It is populated by spirits of more advanced development.

- 113 It is not difficult to understand how the idea of purgatory was formed. Picture yourself newly released from the flesh in a world that you knew was different from the one you occupied. You can see your earth-friends and speak to them and touch them, but they would pay no attention to you. Other individuals, more beautiful and more radiant, would come to you and tell you that greater beauties were to be found beyond if you would prepare yourself for them. You would not be in a place of punishment, but you would not be satisfied. Now, suppose that within a few days after your passing, you could get word through to some of your earth-friends. It is likely and reasonable that you would say that you wanted to get into heaven, that you were at a half-way point, that you wanted their prayers. And perhaps their prayers would help you. Perhaps they would bring you strength, and help you progress and qualify yourself to enter the higher state where a more beautiful life awaited you.
- 114 We are neither denying nor affirming the possibility that there are a certain number of spheres in intimate contact with our earth-world, because we realize that our terms of measurement and our views of the universe differ essentially in many respects from the facts that are known to those in spirit. We regard as dangerous any attempt at an explanation or a theory beyond that which we have given. Not being in spirit, we can no more understand the conditions and facts of spirit-existence than those on lower planes of development in our world can understand or appreciate the conditions pertaining to higher development.
- 115 We do not know the relationship of the different spheres in spirit, their number or their extent, but we do understand that there is no limitation, so far as mortal conception is concerned. Those who have progressed higher, have fitted themselves to live under those better conditions.
- 116 But in each sphere, we understand that there are planes of development. Our spirit-friends usually refer to these as spaces. They will speak of the "fifth space of the third sphere." We interpret the term "space" to imply a plane

of development. Those in the different spaces probably associate with and know one another and have much in common.

In the flesh, we think in terms of numbers and divisions. 117 We try to picture any other form of life by maps and charts. Perhaps in these conceptions we are wrong. If we can grasp the meaning of a plane of development in the world in which we live, we may form a better conception of the planes of development or the spaces and the spheres in the life beyond.

That there are actual processes of education in spirit, there 118 can be no doubt. Not only are children taught their lessons, but the grown-ups also have their lessons. There are perhaps many studies different from any that we know, but there are undoubtedly studies very much in common with the type of learning that is pursued in the world with which we are familiar.

We know that those who were physicians on earth, are 119 naturally attracted to the higher knowledge of healing that they gain in spirit. We are told that the things earth-people learn to do, have their component avocations in spirit. We do not mean that the machinist goes into a machine shop, but he may act as a guide to some apprentice on earth and continue to learn new facts about mechanics—facts that have not yet been revealed to inventors in the world. With his experience and his continued study, he would be the right type of individual to pass mechanical knowledge on to those in the flesh. And the artist, entering the spirit-realm, would not forsake his art. We have been told by those in spirit who were artists on earth, that even their earthly masterpieces were not to be compared with the paintings of their creation in spirit. We can readily understand this when we view spirit paintings.

There is a type of mediumship that concerns itself only 120 with the production of paintings. Some of these mediums have been able to produce their results in daylight. A canvas is brought into the seance-room and it is placed on an easel.

The sitter does not know whose portrait is going to be painted. The medium has never seen him before. As he watches the canvas, a sort of steamy cloud obscures it and passes away. And the next time that cloud appears, it has an agglomeration of colors. Again it disappears. But those colors return, and this time they begin to get clearer. Within a period of ten or fifteen minutes from the time the sitting began, there is a portrait on the canvas. It is beautifully executed. Usually, it is of some one near and dear to the sitter, such as a mother or father or brother or sister who has passed into spirit. The work is faultlessly faithful to detail. The colors are different from any that can be found in the studio of any earth-artist. There are no brush-marks. The texture of the painting differs from any art material that is known in this world.

- 121 There are perhaps hundreds, and even thousands, of such paintings in existence. They are just as permanent as the paintings made by human artists. They are framed and preserved. But any artist will immediately recognize in them something different from anything he has ever seen.
- 122 We use this as an illustration to prove that the artist continues to be an artist. But he may have been an artist only incidently in the flesh. His real work may lie along some different line. He may have brought with him from the spirit-world, or from some former earth incarnation, his artistic ability—a memory—a touch.
- 123 The manner of doing things unquestionably differs in the spirit-realms from the way of doing things in this world. And, in like manner, the different studies and occupations have a higher conception. New conditions and new forces make these arts and occupations of a higher order.
- 124 The connecting link between what was done in the flesh and what is done in spirit is very distinct. The person who has devoted his life to some special work in the earth-world, must be delighted to find that he can proceed with his labors unhampered and with a broader view in spirit.

These statements are based on information received not only once, but many times, from friends in spirit.

Those who reside in the world-next-door undoubtedly have 125 their likes and dislikes. They have their friends. They do not know everybody even in the same sphere. They have their social life. They have their recreation. They are much like we are, but living under better conditions and with a broader view. But they do not have every diversity of religious belief, because they are closer to God's Law. They have a better knowledge of Nature and Natural Law, which is another way of saying God, and they have the cumulative knowledge that they have gained since their first birth. But even with all of those conditions in their favor, they must progress. They must work out their own advancement. They do not shirk duty. They accept the responsibility, because they realize that in no other way can they move forward.

It would be difficult for us to conceive that a very low-minded and immoral person, passing through the change of death, should suddenly become a bright and shining angel. That person has to learn, has to appreciate, through actually living the experience, that the old lusts and appetites that delighted him, no longer bring him pleasure. There are many from the higher spheres ready and willing to teach him when he desires to learn. But he is more likely to reach after progress when he enters spirit, because even though his inclinations may make him cling to earth-conditions, he has a finer and better body, free from the habits and appetites that oppressed him in this world.

When we enter spirit, we are entering our logical conditions. 127 It is not logical for us to have to suffer pain and illness and heartaches and the pangs of separation. Those things are transitory. They are necessary in our upward march. They give us a breadth of understanding and development that we need. That is why we get them.

Even though we may sometimes be dissatisfied with our lot 128 upon earth—even though we may be inspired to take ourselves hence into the spirit-world—that is only a shifting of the responsibility. Sometimes we labor forty or fifty years

and perhaps learn only one or two little truths—and even those we do not see clearly.

129 We are told by our friends in spirit that there are so many refinements to the knowledge and the occupations of the earth, there is one delight after another in really mastering the little details that we thought we knew while we were here.

130 It is not right for us to complain against fate or to condemn ourselves, because we do not think that we have moved ahead as rapidly as we should. We may find that we have been completing a very solid foundation. We may have built less of the things of the earth and more of the things in spirit.

131 We must not form the wrong conception that we are moving rapidly from one plane to another here on earth. We may progress very slowly. But so long as we progress at all, we should be thankful. If we gain only one simple truth of God's Law in a lifetime on earth, we have come into possession of a jewel that will be ours always.

132 And as we march from one plane to another, as we better our conditions and our spiritual growth becomes more pronounced, we shall find always that when we have placed ourselves on a higher plane—be that plane in the flesh or in spirit—we shall have the same feeling of naturalness that we experience now. Those things are unnatural to us only that are beyond our present understanding.

133 We may conceive the higher spiritual spheres as dazzling light and music and something wholly mysterious. But we know, that as we better our condition right here in the world of flesh and blood—the only world of its kind in the universe, we are told—we do not feel any unnaturalness or any mystery.

134 We are not going up to the highest spheres in one leap, because we may be on our journey many millions of years before we could reach some of the spheres from which we now receive information. We do not say that it will take this long, but we ask you to accept the supposition. Even if it were merely thousands of years, is it not reasonable that as we live each minute of that time, we shall always feel natural

and at home as we climb higher? We can not attain that development now. We should concern ourselves with the immediate development that is possible for us to reach during our earth-lives. If we succeed in learning a little more of God's truth and live just a little closer to Him each day, even if we have periods of retrogression, we may be sure that we are moving ahead.

Progress is not always in a straight line. It does not necessarily proceed according to a measured beat of time. A person may be progressing who temporarily gives up hope of development and returns to the things that once pleased him. But perhaps the very act of returning to his old habits and associations may be necessary to show him the hollowness of that which once pleased him. 135

The world in its progress passes through its periods of war and panics and even through its centuries of seeming stagnation. And yet out of these negative conditions very often comes a new ideal—a new purpose. And as it is with the world, so it must be with life—with the life of each person—because the world is only an aggregation of persons. And the world supplies many beautiful opportunities of progress and achievement. Even its pains and its poverty and its disappointments open new avenues for us to attain higher planes—avenues that perhaps we shall not find on the spirit-side of life, free from its fears and its ills and the earthly misconceptions. 136

PART XI

GOD AND GOD'S WORLD

- 1 There is nothing more difficult than attempting a description of God. To describe Him is to give Him attributes, and to give attributes may imply limitations.
- 2 The greater the intellectual and spiritual progress, the broader the conception of God becomes. God, indeed, is not a scientific subject. He is not a literary subject.
- 3 We may think of the universe in its limitless reaches, of unending time, of immutable Natural Law, of the finest particles of matter, of energy in all its conceivable forms, of every material, every thought, every personality, everything inanimate and all that which has life—and go toward the illimitable or down to the finest point of matter, and as we revel in our dream, each truth that dawns upon us pertains to God.
- 4 God's creatures have limitations, whether they admit or deny it. They are confined to small compasses of space. But it would be impossible to go to any place so remote, in our world or in the vast universe, without finding God. No word comes from Spiritland that could cause us to think of God as a person. We were "created in His Image and in His Likeness." But spirit does not depend on form—on shape—on dimensions. In each thing that lives, there is also spirit—not interchangeable into different species, but occupying a vast variety of bodies. The smallest and the largest creatures, the dullest and the most highly developed creatures, are of spirit.
- 5 To suit our conceptions, we may call God by whatever title best pleases us. That does not alter Him, nor can it give us a better conception of Him.

One manner of referring to the Creator may mean as much to us as any other term. All religion agrees that there is just one God—not several. There may be limitless ideas concerning Him, and too often mortals may picture God as their special friend, and the terror of their enemies; but that does not change Him.

The agnostic may worship Nature and Natural Law, and say, "There is no God." What a paradox! How can it be possible to admire Nature without worshipping the Source of Nature?

As one progresses in spiritual growth, one's ideas concerning God broaden. To the ignorant, and to the superstitious (be they presumably and outwardly learned), God means fear. Yet, the universe is well-ordered. It had its Laws just the same even when man did not recognize them. It moved from Cause to Effect. Its laws never altered, never took recess for a fleeting moment.

To those in spirit, God means love. But that is a term easy to say. It may become a form of speech, and decorate mottoes in homes racked by dissention. It may be spoken by the convert, but until it becomes a reality, its value is not known. Does it ever become known in its fullest meaning to mortals? Perhaps to a few; maybe to a limited number since earth-life began!

This is not offered as a sad commentary on mankind. With our earth restrictions, we see little, and that imperfectly. We fail to recognize the simplest and most persistent of the truths which God has given us—and it is not logical that we can recognize the Source of those truths before we grasp the truths themselves.

Those in spirit have no knowledge of a promised judgment day. They have no knowledge that God has ever judged or punished a soul. They have abundant evidence that His Love is beyond comprehension.

We have read and studied ancient philosophies that were based on the premise of knowing God—not defining Him, but

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having a sort of inside knowledge of God in all His greatness. And these philosophies fashioned a theory about their conception founded on the assumption that the universe is God's dream. Our spirit-friends, with broader knowledge than we shall ever have in the flesh, tell us that Life is very real, and that all things in Life are equally real. They have made no discovery of the dream-state that earth-folk evolved in their search for the truth.

13 Man discovers something new to his kind—some truth pertaining to Natural Law—and feels that he has become great because of his recognition of what has existed always. So long as there is something new to discover—so long as there are new views of Nature—we are still learning. If we do not understand Nature, what right have we to say that we understand God? What right do we possess to clothe Him with attributes of hatred and revenge? Knowing only part of the facts, where do we receive our authority to blame Him for temporary pain and parting and hardship on earth?

14 We say that, upon passing the portals of death, we go to God. So far as gaining a clearer comprehension of His goodness and love and law is concerned, we approach Him in understanding. In reality, we are no nearer Him there than we are here. How could we be? What process of logic pictures His vacating part of His universe and residing in some other part? In our own bodies and hearts and souls, the same as in the highest realms, there also is God. When we search for Him, He is with us! But in our ignorance, we may ask Him to do that which is contrary to His Plan—to our own eventual good.

15 We may say that there is no God, that death ends all, that the plan of creation is cruel and unjust. These things we may say, but has it changed God's attitude toward us? We may close the door against the help He is ever ready to send to us through His Messengers of the spirit-world. And when we seek Him and call upon Him, the door is opened, and His Messengers hear and heed the call of distress. We may

desert God for a time. He has never deserted us a moment, and never will.

We hear folk say that certain persons have not found God, or have not found their Souls. No one ever lost God or his soul. He may have refused or failed to recognize either for a time. 16

While man's conception of God can in no manner alter the Creator, man's picture of what God represents may do considerable toward molding that individual. To picture our Maker as vengeful, as something to fear, is to adopt a policy of fear and hatred in our own lives. If God needs burnt offerings, living sacrifices, delights to smell the odor of blood and battle, then whither are we traveling? Men and women, mere earth-persons, often develop beyond that conception of right and wrong! If we would but heed the Godly instincts within ourselves, we could not cherish that wrong conception. 17

The passions, the corrupt interpretations of love that we learn on earth, have no place in spirit. To attribute to God the lusts that are essentials in the seed-world, and build up our dreams of Him in accordance with that viewpoint, is to misinterpret His love as lustful. Whatever is lustful must also be impatient, and given to jealousy and hatred. If we turn our minds to contemplate such a creature and call our conception worship, then we shall give evidence of our ideas by our destructive policies, our unfairness, or clannish detestation for those who are of different faith. 18

If money is the most desirable thing in life, then we may say a person of such opinion worships the god of money. If lust is the most delightful prospect a person has, then that person worships the flesh. If we attach all-importance, all-power to anything in life, we make that our paramount object, and shape our conceptions of God accordingly. Is God harmed, or do we suffer? Will God change to meet our conceptions of Him, or must we change before we can conceive Him as He is? Answer these questions by answering this one interrogation: Which is logically the greater, God or you? 19

- 20 The more ignorant and less developed a person may be, the more inclined he is to think that any mention or thought of God is a confession of weakness—something silly that belongs more to women, children, old folk and persons about to die.
- 21 Those who shrink from any mention of their Creator, breathe His air, eat His food, enjoy the God-given comforts of their God-given bodies—never live outside or away from His bounty or nature, and could not have being or individuality without Him. They think that they are ashamed of God. In reality, they are advertising their own lack of common knowledge.
- 22 There are persons who talk of God too much, and with abandon, as though He were a neighbor granting them special concessions. There are others who are afraid to mention God as a friend, as the closest and most steadfast of all friends, because they are afraid He might not like it. Such presumption they look upon as undue familiarity. To think of Him with love and confidence is better than to regard Him with fear and suspicion. We know that this is so by watching the effects of these different attitudes on the persons who accept them.
- 23 When the weather is fair, and there is a store of food and drink in the house, and there is a sense of material security, the ignorant persons compliment one another on their shrewdness, and never think of thanking God for His goodness. But let adversity come, or sickness enter the household, or the black badge of death hang at the door, and these thoughtless folk begin to realize that, after all, God must be somewhere about. Whether they are ashamed to refer to Him in the open places, or misconceive Him, or heap condemnation upon Him, makes no difference to God. They are His children, and perhaps He loves them, in their darkness, a little more—if that were possible—than He loves His other children in the light of their understanding and progress. Who knows?
- 24 Those in spirit make no pretense of understanding God more than we. They perceive the glories of His universe and

the fairness of His laws more clearly. They see the reasons back of our experiences, and they know that no death could bring such grief that there could be a permanent parting of loved ones. With this better understanding, the spirit conception of God is one filled with more love than we have at our earthly disposal. We dodge at shadows, and regard tomorrow with fear—ofttimes, at least!—and all that seems terrible to us we, in our forgetfulness and lack of understanding, may seek to fasten onto God.

It should not be a source of pain to us to realize that we do not grasp the full significance of what God means—or of even a small part of what He means—to us, to life, to the universe, which are all of Him. We can not escape all thought of God, because our souls, our bodies, all we have or shall ever possess, belong to Him. We are like lessees, given a temporary freedom of will and selection, but under guidance of His life-principle within us, and of His Messengers—our spirit-friends. 25

God is better to us sometimes in permitting us to suffer than He would be in relieving us of pain and anguish. Only by putting the rock into the crucible and smelting it, can its stray particles of gold be obtained. We do not see these truths now in the flesh. We can not see them in their fullness. In committing these facts to paper, we pretend no deeper knowledge of God than you have. Why should we have? Being mortal, why should we not wince under the lash of the punishment we have brought on ourselves? 26

But—the Truth is the Truth nevertheless. And by contemplating the Truth and keeping it before us, we may hope to gain much good. We may still stumble, like little children plodding over a rough road in the face of a storm, but if we see glints of the greater truths beyond, we may have courage to fight our way across the dark plain of earth-life; made dark by our own misunderstanding, but alight to those with eyes to see. 27

In writing or talking about God, there is usually an inclination to fervor—to hysteria. That is because we fail to see 28

the naturalness of all things. We reach for a mighty truth, and try to make that truth concrete. We can think of a house or a man, or a planet, or a system of planets. But when we think of a planet, we bring it down to the compass of our own comprehension.

29 / We say that we can think of a million or a billion or a trillion, and the reason we say that we can think of those numerals is because common sense tells us that there are such numbers, and even larger ones. But if we saw a billion objects of any considerable size all at one time, we might be surprised. We say that we can comprehend the size of our own world, but let us attempt to form a picture in our minds of the actual distance between two cities, and we may as well say, "I came from over yonder," which might imply our conceptions of a stretch of territory over which we could look from some lofty elevation. We are told that there are some stars thousands of times as large as our own sun, and we think we know what that means. So long as we think we understand, it serves us very well.

30 And traveling in the opposite direction, we say that we know what is meant by an atom, but our mental conception of an atom is perhaps as large as an orange! We must see the complexion and texture of the atom in our mind's eye before we believe we know what its smallness means. We really admit that there must be such littleness, but we have no picture of it.

31 In like manner, we claim knowledge, when we really are only granting that such things are true. And thus limiting all great distances and objects to our own mental pictures of them, and bringing all small objects up to our sense of vision, we have the temerity to say that we understand God.

32 We may think of Him as the All-in-all, the Creator, the Great Principle—or Love. And if we think of what appeals to us as our most worshipful conception of Him, we have probably more closely approached a reasonable understanding than though we went beyond our depths into some self-styled

deep philosophy that even its progenitor did not really understand, and that, at its foundation, means very little!

What concerns us more than marvelling at our own brilliancy of intellect, prowess or genius, is the common-sense viewpoint that we have much to learn, and should be thankful for the opportunities that have been placed before us. Most of the real opportunities, we have never seen. It is good that we have seen and acted upon any.

The person who feels inspired to judge God or describe Him or pass any adverse opinion upon His works, need only pause to realize the lamentable limitations of his own intellect, and perhaps he will be less hasty to say what God should or should not do.

How far we shall approach eventually toward a perfect comprehension of our Creator, we do not know. But this much the spirit-world tells us: If we can understand some of His laws, and follow them harmoniously, we are doing that which is expected of us. We must not believe that we are favoring God, who made us and to whom we shall belong always, by admitting that He exists. Having no greater understanding than the scattered and limited knowledge within our minds, we may at times err to the extent of comparing all things with that which we have the scant ability dimly to comprehend. We know that man, in all his pomp and pride, never created anything. At best, man has used the materials and forces which God placed at his disposal, and continues to find new expressions of natural force and new uses for the known materials. It is better, our spirit-friends suggest, to be thankful for what we have, and possess faith sufficient to know that God's love will carry us safely to a worthy goal, than to attempt to think beyond our power of thinking. We fumble when we pretend to understand some very ordinary things, and so long as we encounter anything

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we do not know perfectly, we are scarcely in position to say that we know all about God.

- 36 Inclined as we are to divide the world into the seen and the unseen, spirits tell us that it is all one world: God's World. We are in the coarser material expression of the world; the spirit-side of life is finer, more beautiful. But if we could travel westward with sufficient speed, we should always hear the clocks striking high-noon. Time would pass, but we would live in one endless day—one endless hour.
- 37 We share the tenancy of God's World with other of His children, and some of them we can not associate with in love or amity. We are human, and our love can not equal God's love. Still, what right have we to say that we have more reason for being here than those whom we can not love? Do we have a copyright on God's care and ministrations? From God came every person, every living thing, and unless individuality was real, there would not be the variety of difference that we see in our fellows. We differ in appearance, development, individuality and experience from the others.
- 38 The very fact that any person or living thing is on earth, is *prima facie* evidence that God so ordained it. Do we have dominion over our fellows that permits us to keep them in darkness, and punish them, and add to their miseries?
- 39 We draw lines of race, color, nationality, political belief and religious creed. We create caste, and sort out mortals as a banking house would classify the credits of various firms. We do not see what God sees. We do not see what our spirit-friends see.
- 40 God gave us our bodies to care for them. Like a fine garment, the body should be looked after. It is a garment for the soul during the earth-journey. And whatever else we have, God provided for us. Should we complain about our lot or seek to improve it? We shall discover sometime that

life in the flesh is a privilege. We shall look back on this earth and marvel that we did not behold its real beauty while we were in the flesh.

And just as a beautiful picture is not merely the canvas or the paint or the frame, but all these things considered in unison, so is life dependent on a variety of experiences. And of all experiences, those gained in the flesh are most wonderful, because mastery of earth-conditions is a triumph that helps us along our way when we have been privileged to see the other and more beautiful side of God's Great World.

PART XII

THE LAW OF LIFE

- 1 The Law of Life is a term employed by the spirit-world to designate the vast, unchanging principle of God's Plan.
- 2 There is just one mighty law that gives everything in creation existence, continuity and purpose. Just as there is one God, there is one law. This law has a variety of expressions, just as matter has innumerable expressions. There are the physical laws, or rather the different expressions of the one great law affecting material things. There are the expressions of that same law guiding and governing life.
- 3 Remembering that the universe itself is the great stage-setting for the Drama of Life, the law that governs one expression, one phase, one branch of God's creation, governs all expressions and all branches. There is no conflict between the spiritual and the material. No war is waged between any of the forces of Nature. Changes occur, and from the viewpoint of man these changes may seem accidental and violent. But they are neither accidental nor violent. They are all in keeping with the great purpose—that of God's Plan.
- 4 It is not our function to understand God's Plan any more than it is within the scope of our perception and understanding to grasp the meaning of God. The spirit-world refers frequently to the Law of Life. The spirit-world also refers to different expressions of that law. Unless the student grasps the significance of this one unchanging law and recognizes in the different laws only interpretations of the one underlying, governing power, confusion might result.
- 5 Nature is always in harmony with God. Man alone is sometimes out of harmony.

If we should find ourselves in a great forest on a cloudy night, and had no means of making a light, we should either be obliged to stay in one place or grope our way about. And as we attempted to feel our way through that forest, we would perhaps receive many falls and bruises. It would seem useless to attempt to make progress under these conditions. Even though we exerted considerable effort and expended nearly all our energy, we would still not be certain that we were bettering ourselves by proceeding. We might discover, when morning came, that we had simply traveled in a circle,

In seeking to understand the principles involved in Creation. we are like the people in the forest. We are in darkness and there is fear and there is danger on every hand. Every move we make encounters obstacles.

The most learned among us who have caught fleeting glimpses of God's Law, who have seen merely some of the operations of that law, know very little more about the truth than those who have never studied. Very often the unschooled person with great faith travels the course of life more successfully and more satisfactorily than he who claims to have solved the great riddles of the universe.

We know that where there is harmony, there is peace. The terms are synonymous. Where there is lack of harmony, there must be discord. There is no discord in the universe except that which is created on this little planet by the race of man.

We sometimes forget that we are links in the endless chain of the Plan. We often feel that we are things apart from God and Nature. We feel at times that even though God created the law that governs His universe and His creatures, we were placed outside of that law—we were made exceptions to it. We often think too much of material things and too little of life. But every material thing, whether of coarse or fine material, whether seen or unseen by human eyes, is but a supplement to the cause and purpose of life.

We sometimes believe that we are pursuing wealth and fame. We see men who struggle earnestly for a lifetime and

accumulate fortunes. While they are laboring for material gains, those for whom they were really doing their fighting have left them and passed into spirit. Can there be any reward in the possession of wealth when one is all alone? Is there any satisfaction to the millionaire who has grown old and feeble and has no one around him but his servants? He started out to earn material comforts for his parents, his wife and his children. One by one, they have been called home. Perhaps during the long, hard fight of amassing riches, this man neglected all of the worth-while things in life. He thought too much of the material and too little of the spiritual. When he passes into spirit, perhaps his money and property are bequeathed to those who are not qualified to handle them. He works an injustice upon his heirs. He robs them of the honest experience they should have had. All that he has gained does not count. It is as intangible as the night wind —like the rustling of dead leaves on the ground.

- 12 The world is full of mortals who fail to see the beauty of life, and who never even guess the purpose of life. The truth has never occurred to them that life is the most important of all things and that all else is secondary; merely contributes to the Plan.
- 13 Very often we hear persons speak of higher laws and higher forces. The great law that governs the very highest spheres and planes of development also concerns us on earth. We are separated from the most highly developed spirits only by years and degrees of experience and development. They attained their position in accordance with the same law that governs us. And as they recognized that law and realized that all happiness and all achievement must be in harmony with that law, their progress became more rapid. The negative and disturbing influences passed out of their lives. That identical law is bringing us all the worth-while things we get in the earth-life. As we learn more about the Law of Life and work more in harmony with it, we become superior to the deterrents that seem to beset us.

While the spirit-world does not interfere with our material things, and of course never interferes with the law of our world, with our material regulations, because that interference would greatly upset our experience; the spirit-world does inform us that through our closer conformity with the Law of Life, we become superior to material conditions on earth. This does not mean that we simply exercise our will-power and possess what we wish. It does mean that we see the real purpose in life and that we realize that material things are simply tributary to life itself.

As we proceed with our study of the different expressions of the Law of Life, we shall learn that the mere command of will, the empty assertion that "I am," very often places a barrier between us and our guides. Enthusiasm and ambition are very fine if they are properly directed. A person may make material gains with an unholy object in view, but what has that person achieved when his material possessions have been gained only at the expense of happiness, health and progress?

By understanding more about the Law of Life, we discover that some of the things that we were certain were right and proper, are in reality harmful. We change our views. Our conception becomes altered. It is not always easy for mortals to change their viewpoints, because human beings are creatures of habit. They are very often slaves of habit. And no physical habit could possibly be as deeply rooted as a thought-habit. If we have been doing things in the wrong way for years, we may have a tendency to cling to that wrong method, because with all of its handicaps, we are still able to accomplish some kind of results. Better results may await us if we employ better methods.

While the spirit-world has a common understanding of the principles of the Law of Life, the material-world has a confused understanding of all laws—natural and man-made.

We are taught by our spirit-friends that the first truth for us to learn is that, only through the loving labor of the spirit-

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world, do we accomplish anything. Our composers never produce a musical composition unless it has first been composed in the spirit-world. Our inventors never invent any machine or device unless that invention has first taken place in spirit. Our chemists never make a chemical discovery until it has been passed to them by their guides. We never construct a building unless that building has first been built in spirit.

19 We say that we create. We think that we evolve. As a matter of fact, we simply make a reproduction of what has already been done. This thought may rob us of some of our egotism. It may cause a slight degree of chagrin to feel that, after all, we have been doing nothing but our share in carrying out the plan of progress. We are dependent on forces outside of ourselves. In the face of these truths, which remain true whether we understand them or refuse to recognize them, we very often claim a superiority which we do not possess. The natural result of these errors on our part is to sometimes hit, but more frequently miss.

20 There are periods, or even brief moments, when we conform to Natural Law—when we work in harmony with it. Then we succeed. And other times, we are running contrary to Natural Law and we fail. And because we lack the finer spiritual understanding of the Law of Life, we experience illness, fear, misery and the other negative properties that have their existence not in fact, but as logical disturbances that follow the breaking of Natural Law. Our opinions and our determination to overcome all obstacles may appear to us as expressions of superiority, and a superlative determination as evidence of strong character.

21 If better results can be achieved by conforming with the laws that exist, then it is certainly to the interest of every one of us to study the Law of Life. Our conception of that law may be fearfully imperfect, but the more closely we approach an understanding of it and the more nearly we work in harmony with it, the greater our progress shall be.

The following pages are devoted chiefly to explanations of the different principal expressions of the Law of Life, and this information, like the balance of this volume and those that will follow, is all based on the Teachings we have received in the seance-room, which teachings were taken down in shorthand and then transcribed. They are not our earth-opinions, but they are the instructions that come from the spirit-side.

PART XIII

THE LAW OF COMPENSATION

The most important expression of the Law of Life is the Law of Compensation, or "circles" as our spirit-friends refer to it.

- 1 The Law of Compensation means that we must pay for all infractions of the Law of Life, and the longer our payment is deferred, the larger it will be. We are rewarded for all conformity with the Law of Life, and the longer that reward is deferred, the larger it becomes.
- 2 We must pay "to the farthermost farthing." We purchase everything we receive. We can buy the desirable things or the undesirable things. We can buy health and happiness and progress, and we can buy illness and misery and poverty. We can buy whatever we wish and whenever we wish. We do not receive that which we purchase until we have paid for it. We never receive sickness until we have made the full payment for sickness. If our bodies are upset by any illness, we have broken Natural Law. If any worry comes into our minds, we have run contrawise to Natural Law.
- 3 Being ignorant of that law does not excuse us. A person might not understand the law of gravity, or, understanding it, might not know that as he walks along through the darkness of night, he has come to a precipice. He has no intention of going to that precipitous drop and certainly less intention of continuing to walk when there is nothing to walk on. He is a perfectly good man and really merits the best in life. His passing would cause sorrow to thousands of persons, and it might result in loss to thousands more—real material loss. It might even cause the closing of the doors

of two or three banks and the insolvency of a half-dozen corporations. But no matter how important that man may be, if he steps off that precipice, the law of gravity is going to draw him down and he will be dashed to death on the rocks below. Every mortal, no matter how simple, realizes that this is true. The savage understands that he never threw a stone in the air without its falling after its flight was ended.

Science was necessary to discover that the amount of energy required in throwing that stone to any height would be paid back by the stone in its fall. That fragment of rock compensated the energy that was lent to it. Science discovered that there was no reason to believe that any of the energy in the universe was ever lost, or that it was ever increased. It must remain the same, because, if the universe were added to or taken from, the great law governing it would be weaker than the conditions changing that law. If a law ever changes, it is not a good law. We refer to Natural Law and not to man-made statutes. 4

As science has dealt with material things and forces, this compensatory truth of Nature has become very apparent. The same law that expresses itself through gravitation, also expresses itself through the winnings and losses of individuals. 5

If we were to view the Law of Compensation simply as we see it worked out in the material world—in our own commercial affairs, in business and finance—we would understand only a little about it. We would confuse the Natural Law itself with man-made Laws, and we would see in court decisions only the result of a legal battle and not the operation of a Natural Law that used the judge, the lawyers and the jurors simply as instruments. 6

By this, we must not form the misconception that the spirit-world punishes us. This is not true. If we must pay a debt because of an infraction of Natural Law, no spirit is necessary in enforcing the payment of that obligation. The law itself, that is immutable, that can never be escaped, deals with us. If our spirit-friends can warn us and can show us 7

where we are doing wrong, then it is possible for us to conform with the law and escape the penalties that we otherwise would impose upon ourselves.

- 8 When a person is punished, his first cry is that he has been dealt with unjustly. He says that it is not fair. If he sees another person punished, he may be inclined to believe that the punishment was not sufficiently severe.
- 9 There are no exceptions to the Law of Life, and certainly none to the expression of that unchanging principle through the equally immutable Law of Compensation. There are no half-way settlements.
- 10 This statement very likely will be regarded as revolutionary to the persons who have looked upon the orthodox forgiveness of sin as unquestioned.
- 11 God sent us here for experience. He sent us here in accordance with the Law of Life that governs all things. If He made one law and allowed exceptions to it, or even one exception, it would cease being a law and the universe itself would be wrecked.
- 12 The Law of Compensation is not a different law from the Law of Gravitation or the Law of Inertia. It is the same law expressing itself in accordance with that with which it deals. If we could do wrong and then pray and be forgiven, the slate would be wiped clean. That would be very convenient from our limited viewpoint. Then we could continue to do wrong and be forgiven continuously. If we never had to pay back, if we never had to square accounts, how could we develop?
- 13 The child touches a hot stove because that child thinks that its mother does not know what she is talking about when she gives a warning. Unless that child is absolutely abnormal, it will not voluntarily touch that hot stove again. Hoping that the stove will cause no injury does not save that child from being burned.
- 13 A mother may pretend to punish a child for some wrong act and then may forgive the child. We may say, "It is very

fine for the mother to forgive her little one. The fact that she is so willing to forgive, is proof that God will forgive us." But if we existed under such a loose method—if forgiveness were possible—then Natural Law would be broken. We would be just as likely not to receive the rewards we had earned as we would be to escape the punishment that we deserved.

Mortals continuously are seeking to make exceptions of themselves. That is because they are ignorant. Through this desire to escape the law, to be superior to it, we have found corruption in public office—we have found the extension of favors and counterfavors. 14

A young man of evil tendencies commits many depredations. He does so because there is meanness in him. He has wealthy and influential parents, and each time he is arrested, he is released because of his parents' influence, and perhaps because some of his parents' money has been used in his behalf. His parents think that they have done a very splendid thing in forgiving their son. They have forgiven, but what have they to say about Natural Law? They think that their boy has escaped punishment, because they have thwarted the operation of man-made statutes. Their son must pay, and he may pay for the double offense of cheating the law of the world as well as Natural Law. But he cheats only for a time. Even an earth-lifetime is but a brief moment in the measure of eternity. That young man may live to be sixty years old and never go to jail. He apparently may prosper. But the time must come when he pays in full and with compound interest. The longer that payment is deferred, the greater it will be because a wrong act accumulates conditions of its kind. It is like a net drawn through foul water: the longer and farther it is drawn, the more weeds and scum it gathers. 15

If there were not one law that worked equally for all, what would be the purpose and the sense of struggling through these experiences?

If men take a dislike to us and say that we must not succeed, they may retard us for a time, but in the end they are the ones who suffer. 16

- 17 Let us grasp this bed-rock principle that is not of our creation, but that belongs to God's Law of Life: Everything that we send out belongs to us. Of all possessions, those are the most tangible. That which belongs to us and has been sent out by us, must come back to us because we are the owners.
- 18 Every evil-planning, conniving, plotting, unclean thought must come back to us. It may come back as bodily illness, or as business failure, or as a nervous breakdown, or as melancholia. It may come back in a myriad different ways, but it returns.
- 19 This applies, however, not only to the evil things, but it applies to the good things. When we send out any deed or thought that is pure and good and helpful, even though it may assist many others, it belongs to us and to us it must return. And if it be a long time in its returning, it may come back a hundred-fold and shower its blessings upon us.
- 20 The Law of Compensation assures us that nobody is ever cheated and can cheat nobody else. As we teach others and help them to help themselves, as we give out kind thoughts and do kind and generous deeds—provided we do not make others lean upon us and forfeit their independence—then we have sown the seeds that will grow a golden harvest. We may not be paid back in money, unless it is money we have sent out. But even if we have no money to give, we can send out deeds and thoughts of help and kindness. Perhaps they will not return to us until the hour of our deepest distress, and then they will come back to their owner with their blessings, their assurance, their new hope.
- 21 If you plant wheat, your harvest will not be oats or rye or barley or corn. It will be wheat. Whatever you sow, that you must reap. Your crop may mature rapidly or it may be long deferred, but it will come back according to its own kind and increase in volume. The one kernel of wheat will produce many kernels of wheat. It draws upon the air and the soil and the moisture, and in time it will pay back to the air and the soil and the moisture that which it borrowed. And the

Law of Life gives accumulations to our good deeds and our evil deeds—to our good thoughts and our harmful thoughts. They come back with gathered intensity, because they have drawn the same earth-conditions to them.

How often do we hear people say that nobody cares for them—nobody loves them? Why is this true? Because they have never learned to earn the consideration and love of others. A man complains bitterly that the world does not give him a chance, but the world will treat a man exactly as that man deserves consideration.

Without a knowledge of reincarnation, we do not always see that this is true. We are inclined to believe that all there is to life lies between birth and death in this world. We forget that this life is only a fragment of the great life, and that unpaid debts in the past must be paid sometime. We forget that perhaps our struggles today, that seem to be without reward, are simply the squaring of accounts of debts that accumulated before. We forget that centuries may pass before we have balanced the accounts we have been maintaining on the ledger of life. And regarding the story of life only according to the measure of our earth-experience, we fail to see what has come before and what will come after.

Not knowing the past and not seeing the future, we say that we have been handled unfairly. We forget that we are the same individuals throughout eternity, that we may have been here a number of times before, and that we shall be the same individuals when we go into spirit. We overlook the truth that the things we call our possessions in this world, such as gold and property, belong to this world and can not follow us into spirit; and that our real possessions, which are the things we have accumulated, the thoughts and deeds of our lives, will be with us in spirit the same as they were here.

Even the baby earns its food. And very often, through the happiness and joy which it brings into its home, it earns much more than its food.

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- 26 Why should we overlook the earning-power of life? Why should we forget that we must earn development the same as we earn money and property?
- 27 The workman who puts heart and soul into his task, becomes more valuable to his employer. He paves the way for a better position and larger pay. And as the worker in life's vineyard accepts his task cheerfully and does his best, he is also earning something infinitely more valuable than money. He may not see his store of gain. He may never experience it in the flesh. But of all real things, there is none that approaches these possessions of the soul in tangible fact.
- 28 We cheat ourselves many times when we think that we are defrauding others. We plan and plot in the secret of our own homes. But our hearts are open books in the eyes of God and the spirit-world, and the good and evil things which we think, are inscribed on the tablets of our souls in bold letters.
- 29 We hate, and hatred is a poison. We detest our enemies, and yet sober thought would tell us that perhaps our friends have cajoled us and flattered us and lulled us into a soft, easy contentment. Our enemies have fought us. They have made us alert. They have kept our minds bright and burning. Of the two, our enemies have helped us most. The person who puts us through a harsh experience, has given us greater development. Sorrow and loss mellow the heart, and as the heart softens, the good comes to the surface and we are nearer to our real selves.
- 30 That which is ours, no man can take from us, because Almighty God made those possessions Natural Law. As we use those things and forces at our disposal, we gain. As we exercise our knowledge of the Law of Life, we profit.
- 31 The person who employs money, who keeps it working, who makes it a vehicle for the achievement of greater business success, not only receives his principal at the end of the transaction, but he is the gainer to the extent of his interest as well. The earning-power of money has been studied diligently by human beings. The earning-power of life has been studied

very little. But of the two earning-powers, that which belongs to the soul is by far the more important. Its gains go with us into the extension of life beyond the grave. Our money and our property must be left right here on earth where they belong.

But when we abuse the things that are at our disposal, we suffer. We may pray for forgiveness, but what is that prayer? Do we say, "Thy Will be done"? Or do we ask God to give us exemption from His immutable law?

We often receive things without an ounce of gratitude. We partake of our food without once feeling thankful to God that we have food to eat. We secure property and we attribute it to our own shrewdness. We never offer a sincere thanksgiving, but we are ready with our complaints if we are crossed in our purposes and plans.

God knows what He is about at all times. Any force great enough to build this mighty universe—to create life—is making no mistake in dealing with the finest particle or detail of creation.

We often are ready to believe in the Law of Compensation and admit the Law of Life when the sun is shining and when we are satisfied with our success. It frequently pleases us to say of some unfortunate person, "He is running contrary to Natural Law, and look at the horrible results." But do we ever pause to think that perhaps our gains have come to us not along the lines of our endeavor, but as surprises? Are we honest enough to look back upon our plans and say, "My plan, I did not work out. The thing I tried to do, was not what I achieved. Some outside force, some power that I do not understand, must have been working for me."?

We achieve something very great—something big and wonderful—and we talk about it to strangers under the pretense that it is our own. We lie because that falsehood may give us a temporary position of importance, or may shield us momentarily from some just rebuke or punishment. And these false things are all breaches of Natural Law. Creation never lived a lie. Nature never told a lie. Man alone is

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false. He is false not because he is evil, but because he is ignorant. Who should recognize this ignorance sooner or more clearly than our Creator? God knows that when we learn better, we are going to do better, and through our experiences, He gives us the opportunity to learn.

37 When we come into full knowledge of the operation of the Law of Life—when we attain that position either in this world or in spirit, where we recognize the reality of the unchangeable Law of Compensation—then we are going to do right, because nothing else pays. If we are forgiven, is that not encouragement to repeat our wrong act or wrong thought? If we can beg off, is that not going to make us feel that we are favorites with our Maker? Have we not more strength of character than the child who takes advantage of its mother's weakness? The little child realizes that, when the mother threatens to spank, and refuses to do so, he can take advantage of his mother. The next time he is a little bolder. He becomes destructive. He does not need coddling and forgiving, but he merits punishment for his own good. The mother says that the little one is not well and must be humored. But that child is well enough to think up deviltry and execute it. And sometimes we say that we are sick and harassed, and it is only fair that God should release us from our obligations—should forgive us or grant us a respite. We got ourselves into that muddle. God did not put us there. It will do us no good if God let us off.

38 There are times when the penalties we merit are severe. We lose family and friends and property. Perhaps we are paying back a debt that was contracted five hundred years ago. Perhaps during all that time that we were in the spirit-world, we prayed to God for an opportunity to come back to earth and pay that debt. And when we return to spirit, the burden will be lifted from us—we have squared accounts—the ledger has been balanced and we can proceed on our way.

39 When we go into the spirit-world, we are not somebody else—we are ourselves. And the things that were ours continue to be ours—the good and the ill.

The murderer escapes detection. Nobody has looked on with mortal eyes. There are no witnesses. He leaves no finger-prints—no clue—to reveal his identity. He goes through life knowing that he has escaped punishment. Sometimes the burden of that deed will express itself through a burning memory or conscience, so that it forces the criminal to give himself up to the law. He is wise in that decision. Though he may pay the price in a prison-cell the balance of his earth days, or perish physically on the gallows, he is the gainer. Through his suffering, he has helped balance accounts. He is not so fearful of meeting his victim on the spirit-side. Once the realization comes to a murderer that the man he murdered still lives, the bravery and bravado of that criminal disappear.

Time is never-ending. Natural Law never forgets. It is something superior to our conception of memory. The foul deed and the evil thought do not simply lose themselves somewhere out in space. They travel, and no matter where we are, they find us when they return. We have placed a mark upon ourselves that is like a magnet, that brings back all that which is ours.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that the passing years have forgotten us. Let us not complain that the good we have done has received no reward. How do we know that our good deeds are not our means of paying past bad debts? Perhaps we are permitted to pay through doing good instead of through suffering.

We have willy-nilly thoughts of no particular consequence. We flare up in anger and say what we should like to do to the person who has angered us. But the storm passes. We have not plotted and connived and planned to injure that person. And only as we plot, as we think and plan with evil purpose, do we suffer for a thought. And only as we plan and scheme and contrive to do something good, do we profit through that thought. Simply promising and building air-castles and having hysterical flights of the imagination relative to the good we shall perform, is not going to bring us any reward. It is

like a picture thrown upon the screen. When the picture is ended, there is no mark left on that screen. But a serious, planning thought for good or ill becomes like an indelible mark on that screen. That mark remains there until the thought has matured and comes back with its punishment or reward, whichever it may be.

- 44 People will say, "The only way to get along in the world is to do evil. Look at So-and-So. He has never done anything good in his life and he succeeds." How do we know that Mr. So-and-So has never done any good? Are we his judges? We may advertise every little good deed that we do, and Mr. So-and-So may perform countless secret acts of generosity and courage, of real wholesome assistance, without once saying that he has done anything worth-while.
- 45 We are too ready to judge. Judgment is not ours. Our earth-courts may mete out punishment, but God alone decides through His Natural Law what the ultimate punishment or reward shall be. It is measured by unchanging decisions. It is governed by unchanging law.
- 46 We say sometimes that some person has things very easy, and is rewarded beyond his measure. We do not know the facts; very few of the facts concerning our own lives.
- 47 We say sometimes that we merit punishment, that we are undeserving. We condemn ourselves. What right have we to do that? Do we send out thankful, prayerful thoughts to our spirit-guides, when we complain? We simply close the door against them. Self-condemnation is not in conformity with Natural Law any more than self-praise. Both are abnormal. Both are contrary to law.
- 48 We may do something wrong or think something wrong, and repent for it, and the repentance is suffering. That suffering is the squaring of the account, if it can be balanced totally in that way. We may be obliged to withstand the very severest knocks and shocks to wake us up. The time will come when we shall thank God for that adversity.

But let us remember that we must help ourselves—that the spirit-world and Natural Law can bring us nothing of value without our effort. Let us remember that our spirit-friends can not shield us from the penalties we have earned. Let us not shift responsibility. When God gave us life, He gave us responsibility. He provided the means of progress and happiness. But He made it incumbent upon us in the flesh and in spirit to earn the worthy things.

We can not simply profess a belief in Spiritualism and talk bravely about the Law of Compensation, and think that such confessions of faith will smooth the way for us. We must earn our progress step by step. Unless we do that, Natural Law has not been touched and will not respond.

Life on earth is laden with unfulfilled desires. We say that we want something or other, and we become fretted if we do not get that which we wish. A man says that he wishes to have a certain woman as his wife, or a woman desires a certain man. It is possible that if the wish were granted, neither the man nor the woman would be happy. A person struggles to attain a high position. He saw the fame and the rewards during the days of his desire, but he did not see the penalties. The life under the conditions concerned with that high position, proved to be anything but a life of freedom and happiness.

We have one talent and we crave another. Therefore, people are everlastingly trying to do the things they are not qualified to do. That makes them unhappy. People may do awful things, commit terrible deeds, to gain their ends. They must pay the penalty of their misconduct and suffer the dissatisfaction of finding that what they desired was different from what they believed it to be.

We forget that in the eyes of God, no work is menial. It is all helping some mortal progress; therefore, it is beautiful work. It is benefiting some soul. It is helping the development of a spirit.

'There is happiness in work well done. The more joy we feel in performing our labors earnestly and cheerfully, the more

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we profit. We may not profit immediately in a material sense, but we shall profit both materially and spiritually, and certainly spiritually if not materially. Good work is never lost. We are never defrauded out of the results of conscientious effort.

55 Let us take a person who has an important destiny in life. In order to work out that destiny, to perform the big duty that lies ahead, it is necessary for that individual to learn certain fundamentals that will be required when the important work arrives. In order to learn these necessary things, that person might face financial ruination and go through bankruptcy and lose so many times, he can not see his winnings. He is discouraged. He doubts that it is worth while trying. And then, perhaps unexpectedly, or perhaps in the natural course of events, his big work is brought to him. As he progresses in that mightier task, he begins to realize that his experiences are all coming into their own. He is turning to account everything he learned, even through failure and distress.

56 But the result of an experience might not work out in one reincarnation. It might be extended over a much longer period. We complain that we do not get paid for the work we do. We may try to get more—we may demand more—than we are really worth. But eventually, through the unalterable operations of the Law of Compensation, we are always going to be paid according to our earnings. There are mortals who may defraud us temporarily, but we shall be paid.

57 When we learn a thing, which is always through experience, we come into possession of that which must be ours at all times. It can never be taken from us.

58 The Law of Compensation deals with that which belongs to the heart, and when we say heart, we mean the real self—the soul. Our surface appearance, our forced smiles and our hypocrisy can not change the facts. Pretending is not being. We think that we are going to gain something through influence. We believe more in having influence than in exercising our own

energies. Rewards can not be gained in that way. If they are secured, they are only transitory. And through our dependence on those possessions and gains that come without effort or through influence, we lose our ability to do things through our own merit. That is retrogression. Perhaps it is necessary to slip backward through a harsh experience of this kind, before we can come to the realization that we must stand upon our own feet, and that the forward steps must be ours and must be taken with our own energy.

We look for the easy way, and in the end it is the hard way. But if we accept our duties uncomplainingly and set ourselves to our tasks with willing hearts and hands, what started out seemingly as the most difficult has really proved the easiest, because it has conformed with Natural Law. 59

People who are successful attracted that success, whether we think so or not. It may have been attracted in earth-life during some previous incarnation. If that person has paid the price that entitles him to success, then no matter how much he seems to deserve the opposite, let us remember that Natural Law will not keep from him those things which are his—the things that he has paid for. 60

And let us not complain that, through ignorance, we do not see these real opportunities, or do not understand the Law of Compensation. Let us remember that nobody in the universe can harm us except ourselves. Let us also bear in mind that nobody in the universe can help us develop if we refuse to put forth the effort to develop. 61

Through experience, through conformity with Natural Law, perhaps through losing what we possess and being obliged to start all over, we begin to learn that it is not a good idea to dissipate that which is ours—not to be negligent of our possessions, but to take care of that which God has given us, be it a talent or property. 62

Let us also bear in mind that there is no height that has ever been attained by any person that can not be attained by others, but that progress has to be bought by right doing and 63

right thinking. It is not a gift. It is something we earn, and we never really appreciate the things we have not earned.

64 The most real of our possessions are the possessions of the soul. But we can never fill a cup fuller than full. We can not expect to be paid if we do not earn. And from a material viewpoint, we should learn that we sometimes strive for possessions we are not going to require.

65 Many a man has forfeited all of the good things in life by struggling to pile up a great fortune, when all he really needed was a working surplus. But what man of great wealth can measure his riches in comparison with happiness and contentment? The same money that may cause great happiness may also be the cause of great misery. The same effort that may cause unhappiness and pain to ourselves, can be directed along the right channel—can bring us satisfaction and real joy.

66 How many small material gains have been bought at the price of the things that are really most precious in life? These gains may be in conformity with statutes enacted by man—they may be within the law from a legal point of view—but they may be outside of Natural Law.

67 It is always legitimate to appease an appetite, but gluttony is injurious. The mind itself can be fed too much of one kind of food—it can dwell too much on one class of thoughts. The person who thinks less and contemplates more, may have better mental digestion.

68 As a matter of fact, material gain comes easier with spiritual advancement, because as one grows spiritually, one does not seek to gain the needless. In the earth-work of some people, considerable money is a necessary attribute, because money is in conformity with the law of the world, and in order to accomplish certain results, it may be necessary to have wealth. But in other lives, wealth is neither needed nor acceptable. Its possession would be harmful, just as revenge and fear and jealousy and passion and covetousness and unclean thoughts are harmful.

Just as material thoughts go with material needs, so do spiritual thoughts belong to spiritual progress. This does not mean that we must ignore the material necessities, but it does mean that we must be careful about accumulating the needless. Too much is often worse than too little. But when material gain, produced by material effort, is governed by spiritual conceptions, then that which is material becomes supplementary and helpful to the spiritual. The actual possession of money is not a barrier to spiritual progress, and it is not necessarily an aid to that progress. The spiritual must control the material. And when our real selves will not permit any wavering from God's Law, will not seek material gain that is not in harmony with that law, we may prosper without retarding our spiritual growth in the least.

The idea that one must humble oneself in poverty, in sack-cloth and ashes, harks back to the old days when the human regard of God was a deity of revenge, something to be feared. A broader and more honest conception of God insures a clearer vision of Natural Law.

The person who is rich may become religiously fanatical and give his money to the poor, thereby handicapping the poor, making them dependent and robbing them of their honest and needful experience. Money is only a medium of exchange, but the possessions of the soul, accumulated through experience, belong to eternity.

Even a person who has inherited money, must pay for it, if it is to be his and bring him blessings. Sometimes it is a mark of strongest character when the sons or daughters of wealthy parents refuse to wander from the path of responsibility, and in spite of their great wealth will work out their honest experience.

There have been, and will continue to be, wealthy people who merit that wealth. They have earned it, and they have a right to it. And there are poor people who are happy, who are unappreciated, who go their way without any commotion, but who arrive at the end of the trail with a richer experience and a greater store of spiritual possessions.

- 74 We must not divide mankind into castes and classes. We must remember that we deal with individuals. This fact is true no matter how close the members of a family may be to one another. To each one of us belongs those things which are his.
- 75 Many a genius has never been recognized in the world until after his death, when it was perfectly safe to recognize him—when he would not come to claim a reward. But the riches that he gained are his in spirit. The knowledge that he left something that has helped the world, compensates him more than material gains ever could have done.
- 76 The Law of Compensation will pay us for everything that we have earned. But we are not the ones to name the pay-day. If it is deferred, there is a reason for it. Life is full of many reasons and purposes that are beyond our conception, but we shall see them when we arrive in spirit. We shall thank God for the very experiences that caused us to complain in the flesh. We shall know that, after all, everything was well. It is always well with our souls.
- 77 Even when we have done evil and have suffered as we richly merit, it has been good for us. Sometimes the only way we can reach the beautiful, well-lighted street is by going through the mud and the mire of dark, forsaken side-streets. Very often the only way in which mortals can get on the higher planes of spiritual development, is to go through experiences of suffering and pain and disappointment.
- 78 We own the things which are ours, but we never own that which belongs to somebody else. Though we gain for a time that which is not rightfully ours, it will be returned, it will be taken from us—if not in this span of earth-life, then perhaps from our children. Our punishment may be to watch their suffering in the material-world while we are in spirit. And the way we shall compensate may be by guiding somebody on the earth-plane after we are in spirit.
- 79 We must bring back the things we have taken dishonestly. But God has opened many avenues through which we may

work out the essential experience of this compensation. Thus, even the Law of Compensation serves our experience, because all experience means to learn. We learn not only in the sunshine but in the rain, not only in the daytime but in the night, not only in happiness but in pain. But as we hate and complain, we retard our spiritual development.

We wonder why some people are more gifted than others, 80 why some are talented and others mediocre. We strive to master an art and never become proficient at it. We try to do things we are not qualified to do. But even that experience helps teach us that when we go after the things that are not ours, we can never make them ours. We accumulate according to our acts and deeds. We accumulate good or ill. Every account on the books of eternity must be balanced.

Sometimes we assume that we have brains of such tremendous power, that through the force of our thought we can injure others, and in time we are going to learn that perhaps these thoughts had greater solidity than rocks and trees. The harm is ours. The payment is ours. 81

And so we may live on these accumulations of life without living life itself. We exist on the accumulations of hatred and jealousy and error. But the real life that is ours to live, when we are ready to live it, may never be apparent to us in its true beauty in this world. These accumulations, like diseased tissue, may have to be cut out—uprooted—before we can get back to the path of spirituality on which we belong. 82

Many persons lose their tempers, and while they may not intend any harm, it is a woeful waste of energy. Unless we conserve that which we have at our disposal, we are going to pay for its waste. We must take care of our possessions, be they material or spiritual. And how can we take care of anything unless we sweeten our dispositions and look upon life through the eyes of fairness—unless we have faith in our God and our spirit-guides, and know that whatever is, must be for the best? 83

- 84 We overcome great obstacles, and through that hard labor, we gain that which could not have been secured in any other way. God gave us brains and expects us to use them. He gave us facilities, and looks to us to make proper employment of them. He gave us Natural Law to govern us at all times, and unless we recognize and work in harmony with that law, we have simply retarded ourselves in our forward progress. The law is there without respect to our recognizing it or admitting it. The law is there not simply to punish, but because without unchangeable law there could be no life and no universe.
- 85 It is in the universe we live. It is impossible to live outside of it. It is impossible to take our God-given lives and live them away from the things that God created as supplementary to life. And we can not live outside the law any more than we can live outside the universe.
- 86 The law is for our good, because it holds the great Plan together. It gives us the avenues to progress to loftier heights and to feel the greater blessings that will come with our progress. And we must measure all things by what occurs eventually, remembering that everything we do, everything we think, as we proceed along the path, relates directly and intimately to what shall be ours at some future time.
- 87 If we are governed by ideas of an orthodox heaven and an orthodox hell, then are we going to work in harmony with Natural Law or along the lines of assuming that we pretend and grovel and gain a certain favoritism with God? Are we going to fear God and doubt Him so much, as to make us believe that for forty or eighty years of a life that had many mistakes, we shall suffer eternal damnation?
- 88 Does the Law of Gravity insist upon destroying the rock, simply because it has been pushed over a cliff and has dropped several hundred feet? When the demands of the Law of Gravity have been satisfied, compensation has taken place. Whenever we compensate by harmonizing with the Law of Life, we have reached that point of equilibrium or balance.

If the Law of Life would insist on taking us beyond that full compensation and punish and destroy us, then it would exceed itself, and if a Natural Law could exceed itself, it would be no longer a law.

When we realize that God gave us a great law that governs us all equally, that governs all things of His creation equally, then we shall see that we are operating along the lines of cause and effect, and that it is to our own interests to work in harmony with that law. The law is there without respect to our opinions regarding it. The law exists because God exists, and we have our existence for the same reason. 89

Can such unchanging government of all things be the outcome of hatred and revenge? Do hatred and revenge and fear ever produce harmony? The whole plan of the universe is harmonious, and therefore it could not have been produced by these inharmonious conditions. It must be the product of love and harmony. That being true, then the law that seems to punish us today is bringing us back, through experience, to a condition of harmony and co-operation. 90

PART XIV

LAW OF ATTRACTION

- 1 The Law of Attraction is another expression of the Law of Life. Just as the magnet draws unto itself particles of iron and steel placed near it, so does the spirit attract others of its kind.
- 2 The spirit-world often refers to the Law of Attraction as the Law of Love. Those in spirit who love us are near us much of the time. If they really care for us, it is their desire to help us. We do not call them back to the earth. God's world is all one world, and life is just one great life.
- 3 Those in spirit are often nearer to us than those in the flesh. They see us not simply as mortals, but as we are. They see our spirits and recognize the fact that our spirits occupy our bodies. In other words, our bodies are instruments for our real selves. We operate through material instruments, and thus are enabled to live in the material-world as part of it.
- 4 In our earth-experiences, we find that we are glad to have certain persons as our friends. While we feel only agitation and animosity toward others, God loves all equally, but we are not able to love all equally.
- 5 Even in the spirit-realm, while there are harmony and freedom from dispute and anger, all spirits are not attracted to one another. There are friendships there the same as here. There are circles of friends in spirit the same as we find on earth.
- 6 Sometimes we are attracted to mortals through having something in common. The things we have in common may be only earth-experiences or earth-work. We have nothing

in common with the spiritual part of many of our acquaintances and friends. Men and women may be attracted to one another not through any spiritual union or spiritual qualities. Their attraction may be of the flesh—it may be simply lustful attraction. Desires of the flesh may be permitted to become temporarily paramount to the knowledge of the soul.

Although the most lowly and dissolute of mortals undoubtedly have their destinies shaped by the highest of all forces—God Himself—and very likely are watched over by spirits in the higher spheres who are aiding those mortals to progress steadily, even though slowly, toward their destinies; we can understand readily that such mortals would attract not the most highly developed in the spirit-world as their most immediate guides. They would attract spirits who had not progressed, who had likely been in spirit but a short time, and who still clung to the lusts and desires of the flesh.

The persons of low development who have entered spirit, 8 may still long for earth-passions and earth-dissipation without being able to gratify the remnants of their earthly desires. Through close contact with persons of their own kind in the flesh, these spirits would find things that had appealed to them. But they would not be attracted to those who were progressing in their spiritual growth, who were seeking higher things, any more than the bit of glass would be attracted to the magnet. These are not evil spirits, but undeveloped individuals, who may be, and likely are, young spirits making their first journey into the spirit-world. The only experience they remember is earth-experience. They have never known of a higher or better life. In time, they will learn. And when they begin to progress, they no longer will care to guide and be near the type of mortals who had appealed to them previously.

The woman who is about to become a mother and who tries to live the purest possible kind of life, and who prays for a beautiful child, will attract a spirit of that nature. Perhaps in the spirit-world, there may be a number of highly developed individuals who still require and desire additional mortal

experience. They would be attracted to a mother of the type which we have just described. But there are earth-women of small development and lustful tendencies, who can not attract the more beautiful spirits and whose children will likely be on the same plane as that of the mother.

- 10 The Law of Attraction works out also in bringing to us better things—better positions in life. Just as we attract other individuals of our kind, so may we attract stations in life that correspond with our high spiritual aims.
- 11 Individuals in spirit-life make no claim that they can be happy without their earth-friends. These spirits are happier when their earth-friends long for them—when they live the life that appeals to the broader spiritual vision of those on the other side.
- 12 Parents who have lost their children so far as earth association goes, look forward to the day of meeting those children in spirit. Friends long for the friends who pass through the portals of death. And as each dear one, as each close friend, leaves us and enters the spirit-world, there is a stronger tie binding us to the things of spirit. Very often we think little of the life to come, until those who have been in close association with us, whom we have loved for years, are called back home. And then we find a longing in our hearts—a soul-hunger. Mere curiosity that moves the investigator to inquire into Spiritualism, gives place to belief that the beautiful lives that brought happiness to us are still as real and as near to us as they ever were in the flesh.
- 13 Somewhere in the universe, each spirit has its natural mate. Perhaps in the flesh, ignorance and differences in creed and nationality will separate those mates, but they will be united in spirit. Each of us has friends who may have been in spirit a great while, and when we return, these friendships will be renewed. They have never been broken by those in spirit. They simply have been broken by those in the flesh. Like attracts like. Associations may become very strong. And if there is genuine friendship in the spirit, then when those

spirits become mortals and associate in the flesh, there will be renewed friendships.

We sometimes are attracted the moment we meet other persons. We feel the thrill of some hidden recognition. We love them—perhaps not in the romantic expression of love—but we desire to help them. We enjoy their company. We share their hopes and their sorrows. Many of these friendships continue throughout the extent of earth-life.

The real friendships, the durable friendships, may not be among our closest neighbors. We may deal in a business way with persons for years, trust them and have confidence in them, but never once do we feel a call for friendship for them. And others whom we meet seemingly by chance, enter our lives and become linked to us by an attraction that never diminishes.

Our destinies may be worked out largely through this Law of Attraction. We come into contact and associate with those of our kind. Their destinies are being shaped partly through our friendship for them.

Several persons may come from different parts of the earth and meet eventually, and have the highest regard for one another. From that time on the lives of all of them may be woven into a common fabric. It was not chance that brought them together—it was the Law of Attraction.

Without this natural attraction, which is part of the Law of Life, part of the one great law governing all things, the plan of progress could not be woven as carefully and as unfailingly as it is.

Let us look back to the days of childhood and study the different events and experiences that have entered into our lives. We find that some of the most trivial circumstances, some of the most casual meetings, have really been shaping our courses. If we knew what an important part the Law of Attraction has played in our lives, we undoubtedly would have a much better understanding of the ways of God concerning man.

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PART XV

REINCARNATION

- 1 It is reasonable to believe that those in spirit know more about themselves than we of the earth-world can know about them. When they tell us that they have lived on earth, not once but several times, we should accept their judgment in the matter. If we have traveled to a distant land, and some one says that we are falsifying when we tell about that travel, he can not change our knowledge that what we have stated as a fact is a fact. His opinion does not influence us—does not rob us of the knowledge that is ours.
- 2 "What is the sense," asks the uninformed person, "of our coming back to earth many times? Isn't just one life on earth enough?" There is considerable sense to it. God made it so, and God never needs to consult man as to His plans. Remembering that all individual life, whether of men, animals, reptiles, birds or insects, begins in this earth-world, we can see clearly that there must be a first journey to spirit for many mortals. Never having been reincarnated, these young spirits would likely explain, if we asked them, that there is no reincarnation, that it is a new experience to enter the spirit-world. Such information has come through, has been recorded and has been passed along as fact. What these young spirits should have said was, "We have never experienced reincarnation. So far as our experience goes, it is not an established fact." /Much information that has come from the spirit-side, has come through mediums of small development. The Law of Attraction brings to them spirits of like development. More highly developed spirits experience difficulty in transmitting messages through such a medium—fail to get through the facts that they wish to convey to mortals.

Our higher teachers tell us that reincarnation is a fact, that mankind is always mankind—that we did not evolve from apes or other lower forms, and that sexes do not change so far as their knowledge goes. The man-child grows into a male adult, and is a male in spirit, and is a male when that spirit comes back to the earth-world. The female has never been a male, and will never be other than a female. The dog is a dog always. The dove is not an eagle. There is no transmutation of the species.

Some philosophies have said just the opposite. We prefer to accept the teachings of highly-developed spirits, who should surely know the facts. But if they stopped with the simple declaration of the facts, we would continue to be puzzled. They go beyond the bare statements about reincarnation; they explain why it is so, and the value that accrues to individuals because they are reincarnated.

Death is not a difficult subject to comprehend. Birth is by far the most mysterious of the two extremes of earth-life. In death, there is a passing over into the spirit-life, and there is no lapse of individuality or personality—no actual breaking-off. But when a spirit enters the body of an infant, it follows that the spirit-body must vanish—be dissolved.

The life-principle, therefore, is that which animates the spirit-body and the earth-body. That life-principle is the soul. It came from God, endowed with certain instincts. The infant, whose body is inhabited by a spirit newly come from God—enjoying individuality for the first time—is the soul, that same life-principle. We are not aware of what occurs when a spirit is incarnated or reincarnated. We are told that the spirit-body dissolves, and that the same life that existed in spirit, enters the body of the infant, and begins a new cycle of earth-experience.

God alone determines when the individual is first given individual life, and also when a spirit discarnate is reincarnated. No person in the spirit-world decides these matters. God alone decides and provides the means. But those in

spirit know where that soul has gone—and see the process of reincarnation.

- 8 That part is still within our comprehension, even though we have no knowledge of the processes involved. The remarkable feature is that the life-principle that leaves the discarnate spirit, or the spirit-body, and enters the body of the new-born babe, retains all that it ever knew. That knowledge is not manifest suddenly and some of it is not revealed until that person returns to spirit. The baby is helpless—gropes, cries, recognizes no one. But later in life, as that child grows and develops, it shows certain tendencies, certain talent—learns a certain class of knowledge easily. And when that person has attained maturity and then dies, the spirit at once enters a spirit-body, made up of certain finer materials that are taken from the earth-body, and later remembers not only the earth-life, but also the life that was lived previously in spirit—and all other lives in other incarnations and in spirit.
- 9 Mankind is reincarnated slowly as a usual thing. We are told that if the body of the infant be deformed so that life in it is not possible, that soul may immediately be placed in the body of another child being born at that instant. We are told, also, that a spirit may be reincarnated after a few years—five or ten years, or even less; but that, ordinarily, many years pass—perhaps a hundred or several hundred. Spirits talk to us who have been in spirit a thousand years, but who say that they know that they will be reincarnated some time. When, they can not say. And when we enter spirit, we shall know—sense or feel—immediately that we must at some time return to the earth-plane. We know it much as we know in this world that we must die eventually.
- 10 On the other hand, animals—that is, lower life—reincarnate very rapidly and many more times. But on the spirit-side, people have pets. They are able to keep their pets in spirit far beyond the normal periods of reincarnation for animals.
- 11 No information indicates that we reincarnate an indefinite number of times. We have no knowledge that reincarnations occur more than a few times—five or six or a dozen. Perhaps

some spirits reincarnate more times than this. The point we wish to make clear is: While certain religious theories based on reincarnation place life as dependent on the flesh, and keep up reincarnation throughout eternity, this is contrary to the evidence that comes to us through communication with the more highly-developed and older spirits. They say that reincarnation is continued, with long periods of life in spirit intervening, only until certain development has been attained. Reincarnation is not a play on a stage, but a necessity that has to do with the development of the soul.

No white man ever comes back to the flesh as a negro, or 12 as a member of any other race. The negro may come back as a white man. The tendency is upward. In time, there will be only the white race on earth; the others will have vanished through the fact that reincarnation is a process of evolution—not as that subject has been dealt with by so-called scientists, but as it is known in spirit. This time does not pertain to the immediate future. It may not be limited to even thousands of years, or to tens of thousands. It deals with the eventual.

New spirits, those just released into individuality, may 13 come to this world as black or red or any other color that designates the races. This does not mean that every white man was an Indian or a Negro or a Chinaman. This is not true. Many white people came to the earth the first time as Caucasians.

Evolution is Natural Law. The trend is upward. There 14 are periods of recession. These periods, viewed in the light of eternity, are brief; measured by earth-standards of time, they are long. Thus, earth-scientists have observed what has occurred over a limited period. They have based their theories upon those restricted observations. But they have viewed the subject only as a fragment. When we have accepted the truth that time never ends, and that progress deals with the eventual quite as much as with our passing moments, we then shall be ready to admit that the ways of

God are beyond the knowledge of man—and that we must not attempt to limit God because we are limited.

15 Types of life have much in common. All life comes from and belongs to God. There are points of similarity between human intelligence and the intelligence of animals. God needed animals and birds and reptiles and insects in His Plan. Why, we do not know. The fact that He created them, is sufficient evidence that He intended to have them. God is above accident. He is above evolution.

16 Evolution may be viewed in another sense as it pertains to refinement. Through cultivation, weeds have become vegetables. If those vegetables are neglected, they will return to weeds. But those weeds still have the potential possibilities of becoming more highly developed again, and of refining themselves into edible vegetables. The weed is true to its species. The seed is true to its species. So are forms of sentient life. Through breeding, animals may be developed to show distinctive markings—evidence that the species has been bettered. It remains the same species.

17 Animals have memory, and they think. Some types of animals have greater powers than others. We do not say that they think in words, or that they have a special language. They likely have. But whatever their thought-processes, they think. We call their thought instinct. The most potent forces within ourselves are instinctive.

18 Just as reincarnation means development for human beings, so must it mean development for animals. However, we touch upon this subject of animal-life not for the purpose of entering into a discussion of the meaning of all things. We know that it is a subject that will occur to everybody who reads this volume, and those to follow. Our real purpose is to deal with the kind of life to which we belong—human-life, if that term expresses it.

19 Scientists, and physicians especially, often say that "Nature makes mistakes." In a restricted sense, this is true. Where independent life, meaning of any sentient thing, must deal

with its existence through Nature, that life itself may distort Nature. To illustrate, man becomes diseased. Diseased parents have children, and the bodies of these children are diseased. Nature did not make a mistake; life, operating through Nature, misused the materials at its command, and the error occurred. Thus, a spirit about to be reincarnated, enters a body of a babe, and that body is unfit to give that spirit an earthly habitation. That was the body the spirit was to occupy, but its destiny is not affected if it occupies another body. If men and women live in harmony with God's Law, there would be no reason for our saying that "Nature sometimes makes a mistake."

It is not the body of that infant that needs experience; it is the spirit entering that body who requires experience.

An old spirit, one that has lived centuries, and has been reincarnated several times, can be reincarnated again in a much shorter period (that is, after a shorter residence back on the spirit-side) than a younger spirit, if it is necessary.

We are told that it is our spirits that shape our bodies—that give us our appearance, just as much as our individuality. It is true that boys and girls often look like their parents. But it is not true that those boys and girls are off-shoots of their parents. Each person is an individual—and there is a resemblance between that person in the flesh and his appearance when he was in spirit prior to his reincarnation. It is also true that he will look the same—or much the same—in spirit as he was before death claimed him. If he was a dwarf in this world, he will be a dwarf in spirit—not deformed, but of small stature. And he can never be of greater stature, except through being reincarnated and growing up in a larger body—one with possibilities of greater growth. But this does not make the earth-body the more important; it only proves that our spirit-bodies are copies of our earth-bodies.

There is a refinement in the appearance of those in spirit over those in the flesh, because the spirit-world is made of the finer materials, the essence of the materials of our world. Just as the modiste started by making very ordinary gowns and

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develops in her art until she can fashion and make very beautiful ones, so does reincarnation bring us into possession of finer forces, and assist us in becoming "finer-grained"; that is, more beautiful.

24 And the very fact that the spirit may be born in a body that will be small always, or in one that may be large, indicates this truth, which is verified by the teachings we receive: The soul itself has no shape. It can not be restricted by our standards of mensuration. We may take a cake of ice of some special shape, and place it in a receptacle, and set it in the sun. After a time, that ice melts. We then take a vessel of an entirely different design, and pour the water of that melted ice into that vessel. We then freeze the water, and the ice has a different form, although it is the same ice that it was before. And the spirit, or life-principle, or soul, of a person may enter a body of different proportions, and not lose its individual identity. If this is true, then why can not the life-principle of a man enter the body of a lizard or an elephant? God's Law of Attraction prohibits that transmutation. Just as the magnet will attract only certain substances and have no effect on other materials, so does reincarnation take the spirit only into that type of body to which that spirit belongs. The human experiences of a person would not coincide with the instincts of the dog or the cat or the tiger or the fish.

25 God is not wasteful. He gives us all certain characteristics —true to our types and our destinies. He knows, when each of us was given his first birth, what the destiny of that person was to be; eons hence. There would be no destiny in mixtures of types of life; that would be confusion. And God's Plan does not countenance the downward path, but only that which is progressive. There could be no progression in the transformation of man into monkey, or even of monkey into man. The ape has the soul-characteristics of the ape that will cling to it through all reincarnations. Those characteristics differ essentially from the characteristics of man. But besides this reason, is the assurance from those in spirit, that there are no

such mixtures. They have knowledge of God's Law far beyond our own meagre comprehension of that law.

Even though zealots may declare that they can remember when they were pet dogs (which may seem reasonable when we consider them as we see them), we have no evidence that is to be compared with the evidence which we receive from the spirit-side. Some dogs are much more trustworthy than some persons, but in time those persons will develop to high estates not possible of attainment for the dog.

We find, in large families, one or two children who are different from the rest. They all live in the same environment, are given about the same education. The difference becomes more marked as those children mature. Reincarnation alone explains the difference. One child in a family may be very old in spirit—a finer, more highly-developed spirit. We are told that great men and women are usually those who were born in this world when their mothers were thirty-five or forty years old—when those mothers had more serious thoughts, and attracted higher spirits as their children.

This does not mean that all children born to mothers of this age are great. The plane the mother occupies in spiritual development determines to a great degree the type of spirits she would attract as her children. Mothers of indifferent natures, or who are frivolous, usually attract the same type of children—although to such mothers may come truly great children, who have been sent to those mothers not because of the likeness of type, but because those spirits required a form of development that would be worked out only through handicaps. Many a highly-developed spirit requires an earth-experience that is by no means a path of roses; may need such hardships for purposes of sharper contact with the world, and a greater sympathy with the world because of those harsh experiences. There is certain schooling that can be gained only in this world of ours.

But there is another consideration that we shall remind you about again when we take up Experience and Development:

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Life as distinct from the always evident one-ness with God, as individual life, begins in this world. Today, maybe a fourth or a fifth of the earth's inhabitants (and maybe more or less; we do not know the percentage) are here for the first time—have never seen the spirit-world. It must have been necessary to induct the life-principle into a state of sentient individuality through the flesh-and-blood world, or God would have done it some other way. It was in harmony with His Law. Beyond that, we can not proceed with any reason. It is so, and that is sufficient. And it may be that this earth-birth places a strong bond between our lives and earth-conditions, that will not be overcome until certain cycles of earth-experience have been rounded out. With some, this may occur in two, three or four earth-lives; with others, it may require a dozen or more earth-lives. Like the babe that must feed at its mother's breast for a period, so it seems that we must feed upon earth-world-experiences for a stated time, or until definite conditions have been complied with.

- 30 But, irrespective of how far we progress in the high spheres of life, we still retain our love for and interest in this cradle-world, because it is God's, and because we owe a debt to this world as our mother-world. Every spirit in God's vast universe is born here.
- 31 How about idiots and insane persons? In spirit, they are no longer mentally deficient. Maybe it was an essential part of their experience to pass this way under a cloud. Perhaps that liquidated a debt. And, again, it may have been one of those "mistakes of Nature" that was due to diseased conditions of the parents or the earth-lineage in the immediate past. Such spirits have to be led and taught on the spirit-side, but every one of us requires leading and teaching. The spirit is never insane or idiotic. Those are errors of the flesh —misfits between the bodily mechanism and the soul-principle.
- 32 It may occur—and likely does more frequently than we imagine—that some of those in this world who have the most persistent "hard luck" are here not for the first time, but may have been in the flesh many times. They come to pay a

debt—to balance accounts. They may have asked God for centuries on the spirit-side of life for the privilege of unburdening their souls of the loads they carry, by "living squarely" with the earth-world—by suffering, and helping others. But when we see perverted persons, low persons, silly individuals who must seek thrills and entertainment almost to the exclusion of all else, we find usually young spirits; but if they are not here for the first time, they are then certainly spirits who have not grasped their former opportunities—who have not developed very much even during their stay on the spirit-side.

If we remember that many of those in spirit have servants—that all are not on the same plane of elevation—we must admit that the processes of birth and death do not alone give individuals development. That spiritual growth depends upon how they employ their experiences—how much they study and desire to develop. It is their affair, and remains their own business, though they may be obliged to return to the earth-world many times.

Reincarnation refers to coming back to earth, to be born again in the flesh. When a spirit is first given individual life, which is through the medium of an earth-body, that is incarnation—not reincarnation. When a spirit enters the spirit-world through the corridor of death, that is going home—not being reincarnated, even though that spirit actually enters a spirit-body different from the one it had prior to reincarnation. The process is not the same as birth. There is no period of slow growth to maturity. The change is instantaneous—so speedy, indeed, that many spirits refuse to believe that they have passed through any change whatever.

Through reincarnation, personality never changes—sex never changes. Even the hermaphrodite is of one sex—born in a body in which the sex-principles were merged. But that does not change the sex-status of the individual. And even though women may crave experience—such as commercial experiences—common to men, has not the world proved that this can be done without any change in sex?

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- 36 The process of passing from earth-body to spirit and back again, serves as a schooling, but some pupils are apt and others are dull. We must make the most out of these changes—determine our own degree of progress. The principle of reincarnation alone will not do that for us.
- 37 Why should any spirit, after centuries of the higher knowledge in the spirit-world, return to the flesh and be a victim of the old earth-passions? Why should one not move from a quiet, beautiful home into an ugly tenement and refuse to feel the pressure of the new, enervating environments? Even the oldest spirits, born anew into the flesh, feel those influences that belong to the flesh.
- 38 Thus far, we have concerned ourselves, in this discussion, more with the mechanism—the fundamentals—of reincarnation. If we paused there, we should still be at a loss to understand the full purpose of being born again. If there were no purpose, it is unreasonable to believe that we could be born again in this world. The spirits who communicate with us, reveal these purposes.
- 39 First, we shall take the subject of missions; that is, work to be done for humanity. Unless a person has studied a subject for a long time, that person knows little about that subject. We learn but a few things well after many years of study. To be able to do a great work, calls for wonderful strength—for that type of strength that belongs chiefly to spirit. The younger and undeveloped spirits fall victims of earth-conditions, of earth-passions and earth-misconceptions. The older, more experienced and more highly-trained spirits, reincarnated, overcome those conditions, rise above them. Thus, while many are hemmed in by environments, by conditions around and about them, and seem so utterly helpless—we find a few who are stronger than all the things that seek to obstruct them. They hew a new path through adversity. They do great things—carry on a work that assists all mankind. Such spirits were schooled for ages. They have developed. They bring with them a force of character that is beyond our ordinary conception, and they also come with closer unity and harmony.

and sympathy with their guides. It is possible for those guides to work better through such highly-developed spirits, because those reincarnated individuals are better instruments for the spirit-world to use.

That mission may be inventive. Did that inventor conceive these wonderful mechanical creations in his mortal brain? Not in the least. He applied himself in this world and in spirit, in one incarnation after another, and for long periods in spirit, to a study of the very inventions he was to bring to the world. And perhaps the inspirations he receives while in the spirit-world came from other spirits in higher spheres, and whom he did not see any more than we see our spirit-guides.

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What processes are set into motion after that spirit comes back and occupies the body of a helpless babe? The growth is slow. Impression after impression is made on the plastic mass of that child's brain. That little one must learn from the beginning—but as the years pass, that child learns more easily. The spirit within that body is manifesting itself. In time, that boy shows a "leaning toward" things mechanical—"fusses around" devices and machines—takes clocks apart and puts them together, makes models of engines and other mechanical things—and finally seeks and receives a mechanical education. He graduates as a mechanical or an electrical engineer—has studied the rudiments—has mastered the principles—is getting ready for his great invention, the truths of which are already within him, waiting only until he has developed in the flesh to the point where he can receive and understand the higher mechanical truths.

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We can understand only as we train ourselves to understand. If we have studied mechanics in spirit, we "take to" things mechanical—but even then, we must master the rudiments as earth-scholars. We use our bodies and our brains as channels through which the spirit-world may operate. We reject, obstruct, any knowledge coming from the spirit-world that is beyond our mortal grasp of understanding.

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This is a point that we must analyze before we can say that we comprehend it. Therefore, we shall digress from the subject-in-hand to draw a parallel or two so as to illuminate the facts:

43 Even the dullest person is guided as to his destiny. His spirit-friends may see that he is traveling toward an accident that will interfere with his destiny. Let us cite just one of countless incidents within the experience of our seance-room that will bear out the point we wish to make clear: A gentleman was told one day that he would drive his automobile through a suburb that was perhaps thirty miles distant from his home, and where he did not intend to go. There is a dangerous crossing at one point, and this man's guides explained to him that at this point, he would meet a car—the description of which was given—and that the man driving that other car would suddenly swerve; to be on the look-out, to be prepared. Toward noon the next day, a change in this man's plans took him along this particular road. He had forgotten the warning, until he neared that danger-point. And almost at the same instant, he saw the car approaching that had been described to him. He was vigilant—and when the other driver turned his car suddenly, it was evident that a collision would surely have occurred had not the first driver, alert to his warning, been prepared.

44 We might say, "That was very fine; this man was warned that he must turn out of the road quickly—knew what was coming; but how about those who can not be told?" That is the point we wish to reach: The actual foretelling of this event was a test, given voluntarily to this man, and largely because he was too good a Spiritualist to ever seek a test. But had his guides not been able to talk to him just as two mortals would talk to one another, they still would have guided him, would have directed his attention to "something wrong" with the other driver, would have saved him just the same. They may not have saved his car, but he would have been saved. His destiny prohibited his passing into spirit at that time—even prohibited his being injured.

45 Here we deal with guidance that comes irrespective of the preparation of the earth-person. Perhaps a lady is starting

for the city, and suddenly recalls that she left her purse at home. She turns back, gets the purse and proceeds on her way. But the very forgetting of that purse, and the memory that came to her later, may have been timed to help her avoid an accident, or merely something disagreeable. Her time to pass into spirit had not come; her reason for being in the flesh had not been fulfilled. She was guided without any special preparation or effort on her part. She never may have realized that she was saved from disaster. This kind of guidance comes to us without our own effort; it comes better when we prepare ourselves, when we attune ourselves to the truths of our spiritual reality.

Now contrast this sort of guidance with that type which has to do with inventing a machine, or composing a piece of music, or writing a beautiful story, or painting a picture. As we scrutinize the facts, we shall discover that the spirit-world can pass along to us only what we understand, except in the matter of guiding us toward our destinies, and then always in the terms we can understand. Forgetting a purse is nothing abnormal; remembering it and turning back for it is not mysterious. We are guided naturally, through causes and effects within the limitations of our own understanding. And through us come new ideas—helpful, even marvelous ideas—but always within the terms of our earth-training. By studying, working, developing, we bring ourselves closer to our own spirit-knowledge, and thereby closer to our guides. Those who impress us with these ideas from the spirit-side, have at their command, first, the experience of our own spirits while in their world—the long study through which we passed in spirit; and, second, through the awakening of our spirit-knowledge because of the process of our earth-education and our own earnest efforts. If we put forth no efforts to learn and did no work along our chosen lines, we could not clear the channels that connect our earth-minds with the real sentient force back of those minds, which is our soul-knowledge.

The musical composer first must learn music—not necessarily as an accomplished musician. Some composers are not capable

musicians, but for all that, they have musical knowledge. And we come now to a most interesting feature of this growth and use of talent through spirit-guidance. First of all, the inventor would have as guides, at least for the purpose of his inventions, those in spirit who long had been students of mechanical things. Musicians would not come to him to impress him with an invention. Artists would not come as his guides to help him invent. His guides would be skilled in his same line. And they would talk to him, explain to him. His physical ears could not hear. His spirit would hear. And his earth-mind, which is like a screen on which the spirit throws its pictures, would receive what the spirits told him. His earth-experience, being mechanical, would give him an understanding of what was told to him. He would "conceive" the invention that he came back to earth to conceive—an invention he may have known and studied for centuries in spirit. The reason he could receive this idea—could interpret it for earth-use—was because in his mind there was nothing to contradict the information given to him as an inspiration from his spirit-guides. He could understand the impressions he received. But he could not understand musical terms. Nothing in his mind would react to any musical inspiration given to him. His lack of knowledge, or his half-knowledge, would act as a barrier. We do not understand all things—but we do understand the things in common with our experience and study—which of itself is a form of experience.

48 Many times before in the flesh, that same person may have struggled with mechanical problems—may have succeeded only slightly—may have never invented, but always aspired to invent. And during the long intervals that person was in spirit, he studied and worked, and gained a wealth of spiritual knowledge that would enable him to learn mechanics more easily when he returned to the flesh, and would make possible his receipt, understanding and execution of the mechanical knowledge that was passed to him by his guides.

49 Where the development is greater, then there is rapid recognition of these truths that come from our guides. The

inventor was skilled in mechanics. His long experience since his first birth, dealt largely with things mechanical. Where one with less training might grope, and experiment only because he was obstructing the information that was being given to him from spirit, the great inventor worked rapidly. He received the ideas just as they were.

We find some artists who work slowly—because they are not sufficiently developed to receive the impressions that the spirit-world is giving to them. They have periods of inspiration. They are not strong enough in their development to be in condition to get these impressions almost continuously. And there are records of other artists who worked very rapidly, and whose paintings were of great beauty. They were spirits of longer, more ripe experience, and therefore, they did not obstruct the messages or inspirations coming to them from their guides. One author writes and rewrites, and says that he has polished his work and made it marvelous; but another author works rapidly. To the first, his guides were obliged to say the same thing over and over, and each time he recognized part of what was said, but substituted his own ideas for the balance. And each time, he felt that he had not written that which he should have written. He rewrote his manuscript many times, each time getting a few more words from the guides, until finally he had received the message just as they wished him to receive it. Some minds travel rapidly and with accuracy; others make their way slowly, because the intellects of older spirits incarnate do not obstruct the messages coming to them from their guides, while the less developed persons receive only part of the message at a time—must have it repeated many times. And each time it is repeated, they change what they understood before. This slow method of working does not guarantee perfection, but it does indicate that the individual is not fully developed to receive the truths that his spirit-friends are trying to pass to him. On the other hand, if rapid work is poorly done, that proves even a greater lack of development, because we must admit that only love for one's work will result in inspiration, in determination to keep at it.

- 51 Nothing but reincarnation can explain talent and genius. Talent is that predisposition to do a thing, founded on long experience in spirit, and probably upon previous experience in the flesh. It is a tugging of the heart to do that which one has really been trained to do. And genius is nothing more than highly developed talent—specialized talent. Younger souls may have talent; only the older souls have genius.
- 52 To carry on one's heart-work is a privilege. Sometimes, we wander from our heart's work, because we need some additional experience, or because we do not regard our talents thankfully. To do the thing for which we are adapted, for which we have been trained for ages, is often so easy, we scorn it. This is wrong. Let us try to develop the talent God gave us, to which we have devoted our lives since our own beginning, and not pursue the talents that are not ours, and that allure us only because we are without experience in them. Why attempt to do that which we are unfitted to do, when we already have such an excellent start along our rightful line?
- 53 Reincarnation, showing us as it does how long one must prepare to be even ordinarily efficient, is a rebuke to forced education. To make one son a doctor, another a lawyer, another a minister of the gospel, all by fiat, is wrong. The more truly systems of education seek to discover that which a child has in him, and develop it, the closer the plan of education conforms with the methods of spirit. While it may be true that a person may need a variety of experiences before he finds the one work he is to do, and may be well along in his mature years before he finds that work, let us admit that once he finds it, his progress in that direction is very rapid and thorough.
- 54 We meet beauty of character, refinement, sweetness of soul, and when we meet these qualities in persons, we may be certain that they are signs of developed spirits—old souls, reflecting the light that was theirs in the spirit-world.
- 55 In this sphere of unsatisfied desires, we may set in motion a chain of aspirations that will cling to us on the other side—

and that will beckon us back to the flesh at some future time, in order that our desires be satisfied. In our teachings, we have been told of many such instances. One of our teachers old us about a lady in the spirit-world who had never been atmother—a privilege that belongs only to the mortal-world. She felt that her ultimate progress would be incomplete without motherhood. And she will return to earth to be a mother. She will marry a man suited to her ideals—and her children will be sources of happiness and satisfaction to her. She will never know want—will have no tremendous experiences—will simply and fully live out her longing for motherhood. And in like manner, men who tried to be successful in business, will be permitted to return to our earth-plane, at some future time, to fill the longings in their hearts.

Those who come back to this earth for reincarnation, do not return to a lower plane. Progression is upward—but this pertains to the spirit, and not essentially to material conditions. The man who was a millionaire on earth, may come back and be poor, but his intelligence will not suffer, and though he may have little materially, he will profit spiritually. His long experience in spirit has given him spiritual strength sufficient to master the earth-conditions that would engulf and retard a younger spirit. A man may build a house, and after it is built, he sees where he could improve it. The next time he builds, he will remember his first mistakes, and avoid them. But still he is not satisfied. Only after he has constructed several residences, does he feel that his experience has borne fruit in fulfilling the desires he possessed, but could not interpret properly in the first place. In like manner, as a person views his or her earth-work in retrospect from the spirit-side, there may be that prayerful longing to return and do better work the next time. And there may be others who have been withheld from doing the things they wished to do—and who will ask for the privilege of having the experiences which were denied them through stress of circumstance.

Reincarnation brings new and greater strength into this world. The child born today, has the advantage of coming

into common knowledge of things that even adults did not possess a century ago. The facilities for learning and for progress are better, and all because older spirits have reincarnated, and brought with them their talents, the result of higher learning gained through long experience—prolonged, faithful study. And as time passes, the impress left upon the earth-world by these older spirits reincarnated, becomes more extensive. Each branch of study, each occupation, is carried to higher levels. The younger spirits profit—and even the older spirits are happy in the conditions that they may have helped to bring into action centuries past.

58 Nothing is given to the world until the world is ready to receive it. We may say that some person has "lived before his time." This is not true. He may have been the pioneer in some great movement; he may have introduced some important thought to the world. There must always be pioneers, but that is quite the opposite from saying that any one has lived before his time. If there are "supermen," as some mortals aver, they are only the older spirits coming back with greater powers—helping the world through their more highly trained ability.

59 In spirit, position is gained through merit. How do we know that the rulers of the earth, who ruled in arrogance and in abuse of their power, will not be obliged to return to the flesh several times, and through humiliation and adversity, cleanse their souls of the stain of their misdeeds? Would they be satisfied in any other way? Seeing truth as it is, once they enter spirit, would they not beg the opportunity to wipe out the debts against them, and thereby earn their right to progress when they were returned to spirit for the final time, when they would reach that point that demanded no more reincarnations?

60 There are persons who say that they can remember previous incarnations. This is not true in the sense of perfect memory. They may have likings for certain parts of the world and certain peoples, and these leanings are memories of past lives. The details are lost—the facts are not clear. We may feel

that we know a stranger whom we meet, and this may be a latent spirit-memory. But to actually recall what has come before, would be to thwart the purpose of earth-life and earth-experience. Unless we were shut off from this knowledge, how could we gain through continued experience in the flesh? We remember in a way—through instinctive feelings, perhaps. That is sufficient.

That older spirits have keener memories, applied to their earth-experiences, is admitted—just as some persons have an alert memory in one direction and a dull memory in another. One person is a wizard at figures, because he has dealt with figures for ages. Another can remember faces, and another music, and so on—and each kind of memory harks back to long soul-experience. It is a light that shines through the mind, and makes that particular feature of one's intellect exceptionally bright.

We are told that the training of children who enter spirit is often along the lines necessary to fit them for their earth-life when they shall have been reincarnated. But the fact that a spirit enters the spirit-world as a child, signifies nothing different from the development of the adult. The period of childhood on earth or in spirit is brief as compared with the prolonged, unending existence of that person. Childhood is only an interval—very necessary for the purpose of reincarnation, but an interval nevertheless.

Development is promoted through reincarnation. Thought-quality is assisted thereby. Strength and purity of thought must belong to the soul. It is not the brain that thinks, but it is the soul—or spirit, if that term is clearer.

Reincarnation does not dim thought-quality, but it strengthens that quality. Perhaps the real quality of our thought comes through what certain students call the "sub-conscious mind," which is nothing but a term to designate the real self—the spirit that knows—and from which comes knowledge and keen memory and other qualities of soul and character, as we open the way. But too often these students confuse the physical reflexes with the inner-self. They experi-

ment with hypnotism, only to produce a condition similar to delirium, and call that the inner-self. The soul itself does not sleep. The body, including the material brain, does sleep. The spirit does work through the nerves and maintains earth-life—keeps up the processes. But that is spirit-power—life-power mastering the flesh.

65 We may employ such terms as we choose. We may call the real self the "subliminal self," or by any other fanciful name, but it is the spirit for all that. Through our spirit-powers, we are permitted to have mortal consciousness in accordance with our merits. Our spirits will reflect on the screens of our earth-minds the sentient facts that we have permitted ourselves to feel, through our development. But the mystery ends there. Study the soul, and all other "isms" and all theories become needless. God did not ask us to make a mystery of life, but He provided the means to help us realize the naturalness of all things. And as we reincarnate, as we broaden in experience and as we develop through applying the lessons of those experiences to ourselves, we find that we have greater quality of thought—purer, better thought. But thought is God-given. Let us not worry as to why we think, or how. That is part of Life—came from God, can not be dissected by the shrewdest mortal. We may reach out for cosmic knowledge, but no mortal is qualified to understand the greater truths of God's Plan. Let us master that which lies nearer to us, and which we may understand if we study it.

66 Memory, which is of the spirit, may come to us as flashes of recognition of a truth—which we are certain that we have heard before. Inspiration comes to us from our own spirits—through our guides working through our own forces to help us. Inspiration does not come as weeping hysteria—as nervous instability. It comes sweetly and naturally. And when we return to spirit, we shall feel inspired to help others on the earth-plane, whether we knew them or not, and we must help them according to our talents and our experience. The actor will help the actor and the artist will help the artist. Thus, we exercise our gifts and our development to aid others,

and through our helping others, we gain new experience. We may be certain that our lives are not illusory, that our world is not just an idea, but that all things are real. And we may feel satisfied that development is real, and that reincarnation is the means of our most efficient schooling; the most dependable method to help us impress upon our souls those truths which we need in our everlasting progress.

There are many theories that would make life illusory. 67 But why should ten million persons with the sense of sight see millions of objects just as they are—have the one conception in common—and then differ when it comes to opinions? To every person, a building appears as it is—and in that they all agree. But every man does not fall in love with the same woman, and every person does not have the same likes and dislikes. We live in reality—and we must study long and patiently to understand very simple facts. Reincarnation helps us understand those facts, and if, upon returning to spirit, these earth-experiences were revealed as delusions, as dreams, of what value would they be to us? Their reality promotes our progress back on the spirit-side of life.

Although we may never grasp the real nature of thought, we can at least study the processes of thought, and make use of what we learn. As we develop through experience, as we grow spiritually, we necessarily develop in thought-power. We develop in purity and scope of our thinking. We learn the importance and reality of thought, and understand that thoughts are more real than money or property. As we learn, we act. If we have only admitted a fact and do not understand it, we pay little attention to it. As our spiritual development increases, our thought-power gains in strength, and always for good. This is true, because the more we understand, the broader our conception becomes of God, and the more His goodness is revealed. Time is limitless. Hence, it is possible to work out the progress of Creation in a manner that may seem protracted as viewed from our own plane in life.

Even with all the guidance at our service, with the long training that we have received on the earth and in spirit, we 69

are told that occasionally our spirits leave our earth-bodies and enter the spirit, or astral, side of life. We go for strength —to come into closer contact with our spirit-friends. No one in the spirit-world ever pretended that our earth-life is easy. We struggle under conditions so much more restricted than those in spirit, is it not natural that our hidden memory of the freer life may sometimes pause us and make us a trifle discontented? We feel the better life in the spirit-world, and we realize that we are working under severe handicaps. At the same time, we also must feel the inspiration of doing our best. At all times, we should regard this life as a privilege—as a rare opportunity that is necessary to our development. If we have this conception of our life here, we are progressing. That acceptance of an ideal that has as its foundation a willingness, a pleasure, to work hard, is development.

THE AURA

- 70 The term "aura" is usually accepted as meaning a light that is thrown off by mortals—and by spirits discarnate. This is true so far as it goes. And we are told frequently that the light we give off indicates our state of mind. This is likely also true. But it is not the broader conception of aura.
- 71 God placed an identification-mark on us—or near us. It is like a passport—our destiny. And that aura, or record of each soul, shows the story of our lives. It tells where we have been, what we have been, what we are now, and what we shall be. It reveals our acts, thoughts, history and destiny. Beyond this brief description of the aura, we can convey no definite knowledge.
- 72 Every act, every thought of ours, every experience, everything entering or pertaining to our lives, leaves its imprint. And the course we are to pursue is also very clear. Those in spirit grasp this meaning. We do not say that it is something that they see. They may recognize the facts through some faculty or sense that is hidden from us. But the records are there just the same. And in spirit, we shall view them, and

understand them—down to our intentions, to our secrets, which we felt we were concealing from every one.

We are told in communications that these records are not revealed to us immediately upon our entering spirit. We are not asked to face the facts at once. Perhaps that would be too severe a shock. But the facts are there—and we shall view them. They are with us—not locked up in some vault where we may scan them only occasionally.

The meaning of aura is illustrated in different ways by those in spirit. They say, "We can see by your aura that you are not ill." Or, "Your aura shows that you have such-and-such an ailment." Again, "We can see that the person you call your friend does not belong in your aura—was never there in the past—will not be there in the future." They may say, "We know the true facts about every one whom we meet, in the flesh or in spirit, by their auras. Life to us is an open book."

'Our spirit-friends may also say, "Your aura reveals that this is the work you must do. You can not escape it. Why not try to enter into that labor heart and soul?" It is likely a very good thing for us that our auras are not before us in this earth-life. They might reveal facts that would not be agreeable to us. They might turn us aside from pursuing a very important line of experience that will help us gain the heights where we must place ourselves. If these records were supposed or intended to be at our service in the flesh, they would be ours now. But we may have them before us and not recognize them. We may have a dormant faculty that will not become active until we enter spirit, and that faculty alone may reveal the truth of our auras, and many other truths that are beyond our comprehension now.'

We are being taken note of. Even the most obscure has a check against him. He is accounted for in the Great Plan. And this Plan is the mightiest of all plans; it accounts for all things—for every particle of matter and every unit of energy. Surely, it must reckon with the most precious of all things—the souls of people!

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PART XVI

EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- 1 In all things, there is a purpose. The universe is well-ordered—is governed to its most infinite detail. Life is as orderly and as purposeful as anything else God created.
- 2 To us of the earth, many things that enter into our lives appear to be haphazard and as little governed by definite aims as the variable winds.
- 3 Whatever God does is complete. No man can determine the completeness of anything by simply studying a small part of that which he believes he observes.
- 4 Our ends are shaped, but very often the path of reaching a goal is left to our own selection. There is always one right way to do a thing, but there are few in the world who find and follow that right path. There may be other ways equally right. There are some courses which are wrong.
- 5 Those who journey through their earth-experiences are finding their ultimate goals in divers ways. Life is always purposeful because God does everything with purpose and in accurate measure. We were given life in the flesh not to speculate idly upon the hardships of our existence, not because God wishes actors to play in different roles for His amusement, but because the progress of our own souls demands those experiences that can be gained only in the cradle-world of creation. They are experiences peculiar to the material-world—not as extensive or as important, of course, as experiences in spirit.
- 6 What author ever wrote a gripping, entertaining tale without having obstacles to overcome? Did his characters glide smoothly and without opposition to success and bliss? And

in life, there must be obstacles if there is to be experience. There must be difficulties to overcome, or we would never find and learn how to use our strength.

Only by striving do we develop. The muscle that falls into disuse becomes atrophied. The mental faculty that is never whetted to alertness through opposition becomes dull. The lives of people, like the bodies of people, may become flabby. Sometimes it takes the call of war to tell the temper and timbre of mankind. Often poverty and ill-fortune are needed to bring out the mettle within one.

We do not all play the same part. Indeed, though the number of mortals who traverse this stage of life's great and unending drama may often appear to have a sameness—even though they may be divided and classified according to types—no two lives are lived just the same.

What we do is experience—what we study is experience—what we think is experience. And these make up the sum-total of our relationship to the world around and about us. Our purpose on earth is to gain experience. It is through such experience that we must develop.

The tot just able to say its alphabet, uncertain about many of the letters, passes through the primary grades of school slowly. Struggling with word at a time and numeral at a time, that little one gradually gains an experience which we name education. Day after day, that child is learning some little additional truth, and this truth is all stored up somehow in the chambers of the mind. Is life as a whole any different from the laborious, patient and sometimes protesting progress of that boy or girl?

What makes some people successful and others failures? What brings distinction and fame to a few and nothing but hopeless woe to many? Why do some make the best of their talents and others waste the talents which God gave them? What is it which carries some persons to the ends of the earth, bringing them adventure, guiding them through narrow escapes, bringing them into contact with strange people and strange conditions?

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It is guidance, and it is the working out of that fundamental principle of mankind—experience.

- 12 Some of our experiences are for the purpose of paying debts that we owe. And in the very payment of a debt, that has never been obliterated from the ledger-page of the Law of Compensation, there are new experiences—new gains—for the debtor.
- 13 We find some lives as drab and eventless as a sombre day. Others we find filled with light and sunshine and purpose. Some we discover tinged with the deep stain of tragedy. Many show all of the hallmarks of determination or duty, and others are as restless as the rustling of dead leaves.
- 14 Every moment throughout the world, the drama of life is undergoing changes. Into some earth-lives, there comes very little that is either new or interesting. Some people pursue the course of their earthly careers with perhaps only one real experience. Therefore, experience is more than the mere process of living in the flesh.
- 15 Doting and overcautious parents have so hemmed in their children that experience seemed impossible for the offspring. How many times do we find the girl who has been reared in a home of ultra-protection going out into the world without foreknowledge of the dangers that beset her? She is like the hot-house plant that is placed in the open prairie to grow and battle with the elements it has never known. And there are times when these young and unprepared lives are crushed. But the very process of crushing—the very thing that seemed destructive—might have brought a wealth of experience that could have been gained in no other way.
- 16 The soul refuses to be defrauded out of its experiences. No matter how difficult earth-life may seem, how harassed or disconsolate a mortal may be, the soul has an inner reassurance that all is well, and that the very penalty that is being paid will be regarded some day as a rare privilege.
- 17 We can not see in life's experience the education of the spirit. We sometimes refuse to believe that the earth-world

is a school and that we are receiving only the lessons we require. We encounter some characters who are apparently taking a post-graduate course, who are simply rounding out the experiences through which they have been in previous incarnations. We find others into whose lives sweep the tempests and storms that are apparently unending. But we are attracting and demanding, whether we think so or refuse to believe, the very experiences that we need to make us that which we would be.

The time must come when we shall pass into spirit, as many of us have passed before. And when we enter the spirit-world, there will come to us the cumulative memory of all that we have lived—not merely in the compass of forty or sixty or a hundred years, but since God gave us individual being. And then we shall look back upon the life we lived in the flesh. We can laugh at our hardships then, and we can thank God that He has been good enough to open the way for us to feel the heartaches and the hunger-pangs and the disconsolate days and nights when hope seemed crushed within us. Then we shall know that all of our earth-experiences were blessings, and that he who has experienced most has most to be thankful for. We can not see those things now, and the spirit-world realizes that we can not see with that clear vision that does not belong with the carnal things.

There have been strange philosophies that have claimed that we shall come back again and again until all possible experience shall have been ours. But there is no end to the combinations of experience.

We live according to our needs. The events through which we pass in this world bear the same relationship to the development of our souls as food bears to the nutrition of our bodies. We shall have the food we require and never too much or too little. We are like the fruit on the tree, and our experiences are like the sunshine and the rain that will ripen us until we are ready to be plucked and taken home.

Experience can not be thrust upon us. Only as we feel the lesson that each new experience brings, are we the gainers.

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What man has a right to say what our experience shall be? This is God's laboratory, and it has many workers, many ingredients, countless formulas, and God alone can determine those that are the best for each of us. Can the parents select successfully the future groom of their growing daughter? Can they rob their boy of experience by insisting that he must be something toward which he does not incline?

- 22 Each of us lives his own life, assisted by his own guides and with a destiny determined by God.
- 23 We see families of our youth who occupy positions of wealth and influence. The years pass—the frost of tragedy touches that home and blights it. The children go out into the world, and years later we find them poor and struggling. If money and power could have shaped the destinies of those growing boys and girls, they would have carried the family fortunes to higher levels. Their experience was to be something different.
- 24 And how many times does the waif, whose only life has been the city streets, whose only knowledge of his fellow-beings has been abuse, rise above the narrowness and hopelessness of his environment, and leave his name encrolled in the hall of human progress?
- 25 But to each of us is left a large measure of selection. Perhaps the thing we fight for and wish to gain will never be ours. Perhaps time and time again we must fall and bruise ourselves and get back on our feet bewildered, only to learn that what we thought we were working for was simply a mirage leading us on and on, to some better course and some greater purpose.
- 26 We may ask why so many honest persons struggle vainly all their lives only to glide down the ways of life into eternity's ocean, without ever having given evidence that they were repaid for their suffering and their disappointment. We may ask a million kindred questions that would seem to prove the futility of life.

No soul has ever wended the earth-way without gaining something of value that could never be taken away. That soul may have accumulated debts that had to be paid, but in the very payment came new experiences. That spirit may have come back time and time again, but on each journey through this vale of mire and doubt, that spirit was gaining and its gains were being added together.

It is easy to doubt. It is never difficult to complain about life. Nobody seems to be punished for crying out against the hurts of the flesh. But in the face of all these opinions, the earth-world grinds steadily along and even the earth-memories of the old wounds and the old injustices pass into oblivion. But every one of these wounds and injustices must be healed and rectified somewhere, somehow, sometime. Every laugh and every tear, unnoticed as it may be in the hurry and whirl and worry of earth-events, has served its purpose. It has helped teach some soul some lesson, be it ever so small.

We often are reprimanded when we are doing our best. Sometimes we expect compliments and rewards and receive only criticism and rebuke. At other times, we are rebuked when we can see that we have done no wrong. And we realize after a while that only as we see and understand, have we profited. Even the unjust reprimand has helped us.

The mother without love for her baby might punish that infant, when the child could not possibly understand the reason for that punishment. We might say that we have been punished, which means that we have brought punishment upon ourselves, when we could not understand why. Often the experiences that seem like punishment are essential. They are not given to us in order to pay an old debt, but they come to us to prepare us—to strengthen us—for greater tasks that we must meet. We do not know, and it is not easy for us to understand, that our earth-experience that may seem so filled with calamity, with unfairness toward us, with hopelessness, is preparatory not of what is to follow in the flesh in this incarnation, but of what is to come at some future time.

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- 31 If we turn the pages of history and find new and beautiful inspirations in the life-stories of great men and women, we are receiving a new lesson that relates intimately to the purpose of earth-experience. When those souls made their introduction to individual life—when they came into the world of clay wondering at all they beheld—they were separated from their great work by eons. They passed through the severest lessons, perhaps, without even understanding why they were obliged to suffer. And after long periods of study and development in spirit, they came back for other earth-experiences. Like the little child in school, they were learning something new each day. They began without any indication, so far as mortal vision could behold, of the greatness that would be theirs. They were the same persons, the same individuals, that God once sent into the world for the first time. But they learned. They mastered harmful habits and tendencies. They learned more of the meaning of God and His love. They did not go into their high estates in a day or in the span of one earth-life.
- 32 Whenever we hear or read or learn in any way of any of these truly great characters of this world, we should find a new source of comfort and inspiration. What they have done, we may do—not next year or the next time we are on earth, but at some time. Measured by the time-standards of our world, this development is slow.
- 33 The child who begins to take music lessons, is impatient to play immediately. Years of patient study and practice must pass before that child is even a fairly good musician. It takes so long to acquire such a little knowledge, we should feel encouraged to know that somewhere in time's flight, as we work and learn, as we suffer and develop, there will come rewards richer than we have ever thought possible.
- 34 But let us not misunderstand. We have no right to say that God is sending us these harsh experiences. God never sent any mortal a tear or a sigh. But God is good enough to give us the lessons that we must have—that we attract. In

God's Great Plan, the development of His children stands paramount.

Development without experience is as impossible as the growth of a plant with nothing upon which to feed, or as the growth of a mortal-body without food. 35

The earth-work of one person may be ruling a nation, and of another to grow grain and vegetables. We say that the one is more desirable than the other. Is there more glory in ruling a nation than in helping God's plants to grow and to feed mankind? 36

We would all be great. That is human. If we could all be wealthy, we could not be human. Some of our richest lessons are taught by poverty, by disease and by distress. God does not tell us to have those lessons. We select them. 37

We are very often like the person who hungers for knowledge, and is placed in a great library with thousands of volumes all around him. He wishes to absorb the learning of every one of those books, but he knows that it will take him a long time to master the truth that even the smallest volume would contain. He makes his selection. He may choose the largest book. But whether he selects the largest or the smallest, he has finished with only a small part of the fund of information at his command. Seeing that book, feeling it, weighing it, speculating upon its qualities and purpose, will not imprint its contents in his mind. He must read it, word at a time, and think of what he reads. 38

And so in life, while we see experiences and the results of experiences all around us, we must pass through some of them individually before they mean anything to us. 39

Since men and women were placed upon the earth, it has been common knowledge that human deceit and infamy are ordinary. The young girl, who is in love with another woman's husband, reads in the papers and hears in the gossip of her friends, the endless stories of the tragedies awaiting such alliances. She might read of the crushing of a million beauti- 40

ful lives, but she will understand the experience she craves only when she has passed through it. She demands what has brought nothing but heartaches to others. This does not mean that there was no other way for her. There is always another way.

- 41 We must not imagine that God is demanding that we make certain moves and think certain thoughts, without respect to any independence of thought and action on our own part. We are not simply puppets that are moved about in a mimic play. Take the example of that girl who insisted on passing through the experiences that had spelled failure countless times. She went into her experience with her eyes open. God gave her the power to think and to compare and to analyze. Common sense told her that passion and not love was moving her on toward destruction. And if she had elected to exercise her ordinary judgment, she could have avoided that experience. We learn from the experiences of others when we will learn.
- 42 Suppose that the pupils in a school were obliged to make the original researches that were back of any one of the studies now placed before them in orderly fashion. How far would they progress? Where would there be any standard of learning in the world? Each text-book may represent the combined experiences and specialized knowledge of scores or hundreds of students and teachers. Thus, education consists of absorbing knowledge that has been supplied to us by others.
- 43 If we learn that certain actions in business or in the conduct of our ordinary lives will bring suffering, then we have the power to use our God-given judgment and avoid doing the things that will injure us. We can study the results of what others have done and profit by that knowledge.
- 44 The mechanic at one time entered the machine-shop and started at the beginning, learning the simple, fundamental mechanical principles, and the purpose and use and operation of different machines. He might have inventive genius, but until he has mastered the knowledge that is nothing but the result of the experience of others, how can he employ some of

the highest principles of mechanical operation in the invention of a new and wonderful machine?

The great chemist had to begin as a student. He had to learn the rudiments of chemistry. And yet the knowledge that he gained through his studies was the result of the life-work of thousands of others.

We can gain in knowledge and avoid many harsh experiences by study and thought and observation. Then we are not bringing to ourselves experiences that will be needless. We are ready for broader and better experiences.

How about accidents? How about illness? They are due to ignorance of Natural Law. Perhaps nobody in the earth-plane has sufficient wisdom to know just what that law is or how it operates. There is accident. There are things that happen that do not really affect our destinies and that might be avoided. God does not say that certain persons shall lose limbs or eyes or be stricken with sickness. In the spirit-world, every spirit-body is whole—never maimed or crippled. He does not say that some men must go to jail. But He does say, through the operation of His Great Law, that all of His children must learn through experience, and that the experience that is necessary will be an ultimate gain and not a detriment.

The soul never loses the benefit of any experience incarnate or discarnate. The soul understands. But the soul is operating through a body that belongs to the earth-world. That body is the medium of the soul precisely as much as the spiritualistic medium is the channel for spirit-communication. Your soul controls your body exactly the same as a spirit-control would inhabit and govern the body of a medium. And while the soul is operating through the mechanism of the earth-body, it absorbs all of the pain and fear and worry of the earth-world. The soul—the real self—is the gainer. And except for the fact that God provided bodies for us to inhabit in this world, it would be impossible to gain the same degree and kind of experience that we pass through in our earth-lives.

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- 49 In our earth-experiences, we must learn how to make ourselves worthy. We may crave for something that we never had, and yet that something might be ours if we learned how to really earn it. But even though we do not gain that which we desire, we have at least profited through an understanding that only experience can bring to us.
- 50 The teachings brought to us by the spirit-world give us an experience not merely of having witnessed the manifestations of communication, but of having placed within us something that will make us think. We repeat that thought is just as much experience as action. Our mental processes are usually many times more important than any bodily experiences we may have.
- 51 A business man at his desk may have more thrilling experiences than the man who rides on a horse in a wild country, or who explores mountainous regions. Experience sometimes demands physical hazards and physical fatigue, and other times it demands only the mental operations.
- 52 There are certain types of experience that belong to ourselves, that are neither perceived nor felt by any other person, except our own guides. Through us, our guides gain a wealth of earth-experience. Perhaps nobody else in the earth-plane is even aware of the events and agonies through which we have passed. There are other types of experience that are helpful not alone to ourselves, but to others. The spirit-world impresses some mortal, who has made himself worthy, with a great truth—perhaps a poem, or a musical composition, or a work of art, or a scientific discovery, or an invention. Not only does that individual profit through that experience, but the world in general is the gainer.
- 53 While we are garnering much of our knowledge through text-books and documents and machines and other contrivances that were the work of others, we also are gaining some new understanding, if we observe the things that are going on around and about us, and the events that are transpiring in different parts of the world.

The spirit-friends with whom we communicate, very often tell us they look forward to the time when they will be privileged to come back to the world as babies, and pass through the experiences that we may call severe. Some of us may find in this earth-world of ours all of the beauty and glory of heaven. Others never seem to see anything but ugliness and disappointment.

Many of our idle boastings are merely evidence of our lack of experience in certain directions. When a man is in good health and enjoys prosperity, he is well satisfied. But when grief comes to him and he seeks God, he comes into a realization that there has been some experience lacking in his existence.

Every nation that has prospered eventually, was once poor and struggling. Some of the most beautiful works of art and some of the most wonderful creations of fiction were the products of men and women who were hungry and cold and diseased. Necessity itself often brings realization. As needs arise, the means of meeting those needs will also be discovered. Only when people know that they must help themselves and live their own lives, can they develop. The diamond-in-the-rough has as much potential beauty as the polished gem with its brilliant facets. The diamond had to be cut before it revealed its beauty. Severe experiences help us very often much more than the beautiful, but easy, experiences.

There are some young and irresponsible spirits in the flesh who gladly would be entertained and amused continuously. Older souls, with more experience, would find continuous entertainment and pleasure-seeking more painful than the hardest work. Irresponsibility signifies lack of experience. It also is a dependable sign that the irresponsible person must some day accept his responsibility.

How many people are fearful of attempting anything lest they be ridiculed and humiliated? How many of us hold back from doing the things we should do because we are afraid to try? The spirits who communicate with mortals, reached the spirit-world through all kinds of suffering and all manner of

death. They came out all right. There isn't anything that can happen to the rest of us that possibly could be worse than the things that have happened to countless others who have gone before. There are no hardships or difficulties so great that they surpass in intensity and degree that which others have experienced somewhere and sometime on this earth.

- 59 Sometimes we learn only through mistakes. We are not necessarily punished for these mistakes. Our own humiliation may be punishment enough. It is the reaction that teaches us the futility of attempting the same thing again.
- 60 Most of us crave wealth. Many a man has been companionable and likeable in every way while he was poor. Wealth seemed to tarnish him, because it found him unprepared to handle it. Perhaps the only real test his spirituality ever had came through the possession of wealth. Perhaps his real individuality never was revealed until he was put to the test.
- 61 The contrary side of the picture proves to us that very often the test that is needed most is poverty. We see examples of the wrong that is done through making leaners of others. We think we are doing an act of great philanthropy when we support somebody in idleness and deprive that person of the experience that he certainly must have—the experience of standing on his own feet and working out his own development.
- 62 We are often striving to do the things that we can not do. We are dissatisfied too often to develop the talents that God gave us. Many persons aspire to be wonderful vocalists when they have no gift for singing. Others wish to become great in different directions, and they neglect the ability that God brought to them.
- 63 Why should we refuse the kind of experience that we ought to have? If God gives any ability in any direction, He certainly placed us here to do a work that we needed to do—for ourselves primarily, and perhaps for others. If we go out of the paths that we could follow with assurance of gaining the very experiences we would need, and place ourselves in line

to experience something that we simply have forced upon ourselves, then we have gained little—retarded ourselves.

We know that mortals very rarely follow their own bents without seeking the extraneous things. People may fall into evil ways. They may drink spirituous liquors to excess. They may gamble. They may engage themselves in needless scandals. This does not imply that they were obliged to have these experiences—they sought them. They forced those experiences upon themselves. In the meantime, the work they had to do, suffered just that much delay. 64

We may ask how any person is to know what his work is to be. But let us not lose sight of the truth that God gave every mortal an inner sense of right and wrong. God has given every mortal the same kind of opportunity. It is the mortal who makes the mistake. It is the mortal who follows experiences that he might never require, if he had not wandered from the path he knew to be right and from the occupation he knew that he could look after and develop, in some manner that would approach success. 65

The truths of Spiritualism refer not to certain types of individuals, but to all people. When we talk about experience and its value and its necessity in soul development and progress, we must keep in view not simply the great—not merely the successful—not only the physically well—but all others. We must not think simply of one race, but of all races and all nationalities, of all persons in every stage of life. These truths apply to every person, young and old. 66

In the lives of many, experiences are essentially narrow. We see people whose existences are so colorless that we wonder how they can endure the monotony of their lives. We see others who know only brutal toil. But all are pupils in God's school. Each is working out the solution of his own achievement. Many are gaining experience they do not require, and others need experiences seemingly without end. 67

If we would remember that the things that emanate from ourselves are of the greatest value, and the efforts we put 68

forth and the sincerity we put into our work, determine the degree and value of our experiences, then we might understand more of the necessity of our own responsibility to our own lives.

69 If our spirit-friends came and smoothed the way for us, if they refused to permit us to pass through the experiences that we seek, then how could we develop? Why should miracles be worked for us, when we insist upon doing things that we must do before we can learn what they mean? When we merit help in any direction, it comes to us. If we refuse to merit assistance, it can not be ours.

70 We do not remember what has passed before in previous earth-lives or in our lives in spirit. We see the reality and feel the impress of things material. Without that reality, the experience would lose its value. The real purpose of experience is development. One person may have many experiences and extract few lessons from them. Another person may have fewer experiences and learn much more.

71 The old soul—one who has been reincarnated several times—is usually quicker to perceive the meaning of an experience. The person who is trained to discern a certain thing, will see that thing much quicker than anybody else. The man schooled in woodcraft, will see indentations in the grass and leaves, and messages in the broken twigs, that will tell the complete story of the game he pursues—its kind and the direction it took, whether it walked or ran, and when it passed that way. The person who does not understand woodcraft, who is not skilled in that direction, can not see a single sign in the markings, that are as an open book to the huntsman. The artist can see a combination of colors in a sunset or a landscape that the person without art does not discern.

72 And so it is with all experience. The longer we have lived and the more we have learned, the more diligently we have studied—meaning life and its events—the more easily we can find the lesson in each experience.

73 If a person says that his experiences in life have made him crafty and dishonest, that indicates that he does not under-

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stand. He has failed to get the lessons that were taught to him. He has been a dull pupil in God's school.

As we pass through different events—different experiences
—we are sometimes so close to them and so confused that we
do not see their lessons clearly. We may not see those lessons
until years have passed, and then we discover that what
appeared to be so unjust, was really helpful to us. It had
taught us something that we were obliged to learn. Different
experiences through which we pass, not only in the flesh but
in spirit as well, should enable us to develop spiritually. We
gain greater strength and more faith. And the longer we
live, the more experiences we are privileged to have.

Development is the real aim of life. All of our earthly
possessions, and even our earth-bodies, are like properties on
a stage. They are settings for our roles in the drama.

We know that before a piece of land can be cultivated, it
must be prepared for cultivation. Stones and stumps and
undergrowth must be removed. The ground must be plowed.
A great amount of work must be done before there can be a
harvest. Some of our experiences are preparing the ground
for development. Other experiences are following up that
preparation and giving us our development. Spiritually, we
must make ourselves ready to grow, and then we can grow.

But if we see only our hardships and forget our blessings—
if we are selfish, if we drive love and harmony and faith from
our hearts, if we put our guides from us—then we are depriv-
ing ourselves of the development that we otherwise could
extract from the events which we live and the thoughts we
have. Discouraged, we may say that we wish we were dead,
but we can never die. We can pass into spirit, but perhaps
only to regret that we refused the opportunity of that develop-
ment which could come only through earth-experience.

Life is ours to cultivate, and unless we are willing to prepare
ourselves for that cultivation, how can we reap the harvest?
Suppose that our experiences are harsh—that each period of
preparation is fraught with pain and grief and penury. If
the spiritual development that follows is the result of our

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acknowledgment of the lessons we have had, then how thankful we should be, that no matter what our trials and difficulties amounted to, we were allowed to cultivate our gardens. Perhaps, as we develop through these experiences, through the actions and thoughts that are ours, we shall find that we have gained spiritually and materially at the same time.

79 Too often, we complain that our bread-winning demands deprive us of time to think spiritual thoughts. But in each working day, how many of us utilize even ten per cent. of our thinking capacity? How many people are so busy at their labors, they can not send one little thanksgiving-thought to their Creator for the privilege of working out their own development? We say we do not have time for these things, and some of us decide that we will set apart an hour or thirty minutes or a quarter-hour each day, to go into a silent room and meditate. We feel that, perhaps, if we can give this little time to God and the spirit-world, we have done our duty. But we forget that the heart that is thankful in adversity or success, sends out its gratitude continuously and opens the door for more beautiful help from the spirit-side.

80 It is a notable fact, and one recognized readily by those who understand Spiritualism and Communication, that the spirit-world does not complain about any experience. The guides look upon each experience as a rare privilege. In spirit, every individual enters into his or her work with happiness. It is a pleasure to serve. But in the earth-plane, we talk about our aches and our pains, about our losses, about the injustices we have suffered. We whine unremittingly, because of the very experiences that we certainly must have if we are to give growth to ourselves spiritually.

81 Development does not mean simply attending seances. It does not mean participation in communication. Reading this book and studying it, and reading the volumes that follow and studying them, will not necessarily mean development. Acknowledging that a statement is true is one thing, but trying to apply that truth to our own lives is another thing.

Experience is not simply witnessing—it is living. We can see and admit the reality of something, be it a picture or a theory, but it is not ours until we live the lesson that it teaches. We might meditate until the end of time—we might talk volubly about will-power and concentration and the other faculties at our command—but of what value is all this spouting if we are undeveloped? We might permit our egotism to tell us that we have become so much greater and more wonderful than our fellows, we blind ourselves to every lesson. Perhaps only through getting on our knees in humility, through being held up to ridicule and scorn, can we ever come to an understanding that we have only started to learn the truths that we must study through all eternity.

Sometimes, those who are experiencing the greatest progress seem to be punished the quickest for any wrong act. They will say, "Day after day, year in and year out, I am trying seriously to develop, and yet for any little infraction, I am punished immediately. It is unfair." What they should say is this: "It is a pleasure to me to try to develop, to try to learn, to try to expand in my knowledge and usefulness, day after day and year after year. And I feel that I am succeeding because, if I do a wrong act or think a wrong thought, the reprimand, that I may call punishment, comes speedily. It is not given an opportunity of accumulating and of engulfing me with its fury. I am privileged to have these lessons brought to me rapidly. I have everything to be thankful for. Only because I am able to learn, am I given the opportunity of seeing and feeling whatever I do or think that may be wrong."

Thus we proceed along our way, only to learn that vain-glorious boasting of our development is in itself a sign of our lack of development. We do not need to tell others when we are developed. We can not hide the truth about ourselves, the quality that is within us, no matter how much we try. We do not need to congratulate ourselves upon our progress, because if we are sincere in turning our experiences to account in developing and growing spiritually, we have neither the time nor the inclination to boast. We see new manifestations

of truth—new and inviting avenues of learning and of developing more. Our days and our efforts are too well occupied with grasping the real opportunities of development to pause and pose and bow in acknowledgment of empty flattery.

85 But we may be contented. A great satisfaction and happiness may steal over us, and can not be interpreted as egotism or as stagnation. To perceive a truth is to feel the beauty of it, and this is just as true when it is truth that comes through suffering, as it is of truth that comes through success.

86 We have no right to say that we are willing to wait until we enter the spirit-world before we develop. We may find that when that time comes, we are filled with woe, because we shall then realize that the development we needed most belonged to things incarnate, and then we shall long to come back to fulfill the mission that we ignored.

87 If we are to possess, then we must strive to possess. We came here for a purpose, and that purpose had back of it God's love. If we refuse to learn without suffering, let us suffer. Perhaps through believing that we are so very spiritual, we ignore material facts and conditions.

88 Very often we do not make the material conditions right for spiritual progress. We surround ourselves only with penury and woe, with gossip and vituperation. If we live in misery and dirt, are we giving ourselves the benefit of the assistance that God placed at our command? Can we be filthy of body and clean of spirit? Is it not an insult to God's gifts to neglect our bodies and to refuse to live under decent and wholesome conditions? God did not create a material world for us to neglect, ridicule and condemn. He made it beautiful and filled it with endless opportunities and facilities, and the proper use of every one may be a gain in the line of our spiritual growth.

89 We say that the innocent suffer with the guilty. The innocent often experience harsh and temporary embarrassment because of the acts of the guilty ones. But if we suffer through the wrong that someone else has done, that very suffering

brings its lessons of patience and faith. But when that condition passes—without respect to how long the time may be before it has gone—we may be sure that we have been compensated amply.

Development depends more upon thought, upon our attitude of mind, than upon our bodily acts. If we think wrong thoughts, we shrivel ourselves—we stunt our growth. To think right, is to live right. Believing and thinking become one and the same thing. If we say that we believe in beauty and progress, and still think misery and revenge and hatred, then we belie our belief. We are believing what we really think, and if we do not think right, how are we going to build our belief? What is belief but that feeling that permeates us and controls us and urges us to do better, because nothing else can satisfy us half so well?

The spirit-world is not coaxing us to develop. The angels are not going to pause in their upward progress simply because we refuse to progress. But when we do the right thing, when we try to live in the right way, then we bring unto ourselves, through the Law of Attraction, the great assistance that is always waiting for us when we call upon it and merit it.

We may neglect our garden or cultivate it. We may feel happy in doing our work or detest it. We may struggle and succeed, or refuse to progress. Who is the gainer or the loser in either case? Whom have we helped or injured but ourselves?

Suppose that our work on earth is crude and that our viewpoint is restricted. We are not censured because our earth-vision is not as clear as our spirit-vision. We must be strong enough to take the blame when it is ours, and we need not worry about taking credit that is ours, because like our own blame, it must come to us sometime. We can not force ourselves to develop any more than we can create energy. We have to grow and develop spiritually, just as we have to grow bodily.

Let us remember that while we may often be hampered physically, there is no reason why we should be hampered in

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thought, which is a powerful instrument of progress. Our bodies may be placed in prison, but our thoughts may be as free as the air. If we but develop that vision that unfolds the inner knowledge, which tells us that no limitations are placed upon us if we work to win, then we are not oppressed so much by the immediate hardships and obstacles. We can see that they are essentials which we need, that we can master them, that no obstacle can be so great in the path of the developing spirit as to hold it back in its spiritual growth.

- 95 We have made money the law of the world, and we sometimes permit it to become stronger than spiritual law, so far as our own progress is concerned. But love of money and all other possessions, like false pride, can not endure. These things must pass out of our lives when we leave the flesh. And if we can rise above them while we are in the flesh, our reward has become proportionately greater. Our reward is the knowledge that we have developed—that we have gained those things which God has given to us and that can not be taken from us.
- 96 What right have we to abuse our fellow-mortals, to hold them back, to create hardships for them? What have we gained? In the end, we shall find that they have developed most, and we least.
- 97 Sometimes experience teaches us that, in anticipating a thing, we get more out of it than we do in possessing it. We see wealth as a great gain, but do we stop to think of the tremendous difficulties of gaining wealth? We pursue many phantoms. We reach out for the things that we would not enjoy were they ours. But if we were striving to pay our debts, to live right with the world and ourselves, then these mocking temptations would have no effect upon us.
- 98 The earth is for all men. But the things worth-while, whether of the earth or of spirit, must be earned—and the greatest of these are the things of spirit.. Just as we shun the old associates beyond whom we have passed in our development, so must we shun the old habits and temptations when

their reality has been revealed to us through our spiritual growth. This does not imply that we should always be satisfied with ourselves. There is healthy dissatisfaction that leads to genuine and worthy aspirations. Just as the persons with the keenest intellects are those who use their minds to best advantage, so are those who are most highly developed the ones who have used their experiences to greatest advantage.

We have to progress whether we wish to or not. We must look after our development some time. Why not begin just as soon as possible? The farther we progress, the easier it is to develop. The more we learn through our experiences, the greater discernment we have in making use of those experiences that are still to come. But no person ever received the full benefit of his experiences without first seeing his own faults. If we do not see our shortcomings, how are we going to overcome our faults? If we can not start without realizing that it is ourselves who must gain, then of what value would experience be?

While experience in the flesh is of a nature different from 100 experience in spirit, the very process of living insures opportunities of experience. This is true in spirit the same as in the mortal-body. It pertains to all spheres of life—the lowest and the highest. Experience in spirit is necessarily of longer duration than earth-experience, and is more important.

Without experience, there is no development. The progress, 101 the unfoldment of the God-given powers of the soul, must depend always upon that which the individual passes through. This includes thought as well as action.

It is not necessary to understand the intimate truths of 102 spirit-existence in order to grasp the significance and naturalness of experience in spirit. Certain facts we of the mortal-world are able to perceive and accept. These facts are sufficient to reveal to us that life on the spirit-side is but a continuation of the earth-life, that the spirit-world is as natural to those in spirit as our world is to us, that those on the other side have home-life and occupations, and they study and have

their friendships—and enjoy an existence that is more nearly free than our own—less hampered by our restrictions.

- 103 Those on the spirit-side have their work to do. They must learn, not simply through study, but through the performance of duty.
- 104 Experience in spirit may be classified in a general way. We realize that such classification must be general, because there are many facts pertaining to spirit that we could not understand without being in spirit. We must content ourselves with that which is within our scope of comprehension. This classification would include the following divisions:
- 105 The guidance of mortals, which places those in spirit in intimate contact with the conditions of the earth-world. When our spirit-friends assist us in solving our problems, in guiding our business moves, in guarding us against errors that we can be saved from committing, in helping us move toward our destinies, they come into direct contact with the earth-world. They adapt themselves to our conditions. They tell us that virtually they are back in the flesh—so intent are they on helping us live our lives as much as they are permitted to do so. Through this guidance, those in spirit actually partake of earth-experiences, and profit through that form of development that has to do with our world.
- 106 The second division of our classification relates to the study and work of those in spirit who are preparing for another incarnation—the exact time of which they do not know. When they return to the earth, their missions may be to do some important work for humanity, or to overcome certain tendencies that they were not able to master in the flesh previously, or perhaps to pass through experiences that they feel they desire—that they need before they can progress further. Again, they may have debts to pay that can be liquidated only in the flesh.
- 107 The musician of considerable talent, has been a musician for ages—and most of his talent was developed while he was in spirit. He brings back the “predisposition” to be a musician.

And the inventor learned mechanical truths in spirit—learned the details of the very inventions he will give to the earth-world at some later time. Great brilliancy of mind is evidence that the very bright person has been a student for centuries; perhaps for thousands of years. If we measure our earth-learning by the things there are to learn, we can better understand that years must pass before we have really mastered a few simple facts.

Spirit-experience, through guidance of mortals, may also 108 be woven around the desire to pay back an earth-debt while in spirit. This may be done under certain conditions. The person who has defrauded another out of money, may be able to so guide that person from spirit, as to help him earn the money he had lost formerly through the deceit of the one who is now on the spirit-side. And other debts are often paid in this same way. Not always does the individual have to return to the earth-world to pay earth-obligations. And until debts are paid, the spirit is not free to progress. His conscience is awakened, his memory is keener, and he needs no admonitions that he should purify his record by righting past wrongs. He accepts that as a blessing. He knows that Natural Law demands that his ledger-page be balanced. He is thankful for the opportunity of balancing it.

Our most proficient work is performed in spirit. Unhindered 109 by the obstructions and obstacles of the earth-world, those in spirit learn more rapidly, develop more easily because their understanding is less misty and their faculties are sharpened. It is likely that those in spirit possess faculties that we do not know while we are in earth-bodies. We can understand according to our senses. We can not realize that if a thing can not be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or felt, it can be comprehended. The truths that those in spirit understand through any faculty that we do not possess, can not be told to us in terms of tangible fact so that we can grasp them.

Our spirit-friends refer to our auras. They say that they 110 can "see" (understand) our past, present and future by studying our auras, or records. But they can not make us realize

how this is possible. If they really sense these truths not through sight or any of the senses with which we are familiar, then how can we grasp the process? We must accept their explanations that "they know." To illustrate: We see an object. The sense of seeing it is in our brains, but we regard that object as occupying a position some distance from us, and we are correct in our interpretation of what we see. Do we ever pause to analyze just what has occurred in our eyes and nerves and brains before we have the understanding of sight? We accept sight as natural—and our interpretations of it are correct so far as the utility of our sense of sight is concerned. We hear a sound not as existing in our ears or our brains, but from the direction in which it travels to us. But when we feel, or taste, we are in intimate contact with that which we feel or taste. We may smell something that is a considerable distance from us—and yet we may not know its distance or direction. And within the scope of these five senses, we confine our earth-experiences. We can realize nothing beyond those senses—except as we develop and are able to project those senses into seeing and hearing those in the spirit-world. Then it is because our spirits become more powerful in our earth-lives than our earth-bodies. Our spirits always hear and see, but must transmit that knowledge to our mortal brains. And much that our spirits sense is not carried to our earth-recognition—never becomes impressed upon our earth-minds as an experience. But ordinarily, mortals sense nothing of that which pertains to spirit. The thoughts that are given to us, seem to be our own. The impulses and inspirations that flash to us, and shape our destinies, appear to be the workings of our own minds.

- 111 We are told that it is not possible for us, while in the flesh, to understand "what the spirit-life is like." That knowledge belongs to life in spirit, because—first—the spirit-body is attuned to the conditions of the spirit-world; and—second because it is likely that additional faculties are required to experience the conditions of the spirit-life.
- 112 If we accept these views as having the possibility of fact, then we shall understand that experience in spirit may differ

in many respects from experience in the flesh; that the dis-carnate individual has avenues of experience and learning opened to him, that could not belong to life in the flesh.

Those in spirit "draw" upon us. In the seance-room, and 113 away from it, our physical strength (and, perhaps, in some measure, our spirit-strength) is drawn upon to form a connecting link between the two expressions of life, so that those in spirit can govern physical conditions. No one in the flesh has this power. Many think that they possess it. The hypnotist, who believes that he has a secret power of mind, is really a type of medium. He supplies the force necessary to permit his spirit-helpers to control his subjects. And, despite the limitless number of volumes written on the subject, there are sound reasons for believing that the power we call telepathy is nothing more than a sensing of the words actually spoken to our own incarnate spirits by others in spirit. Telepathy itself—unaided by an intervening intelligence—may be a faculty of spirit. And—it may not be. Those in spirit—those nearest to us—say that there are others quite as invisible to them as they are to us. And we are not prepared to say that thought-transmission in spirit is independent of a still higher form of assistance. We do not know.

That those in spirit possess certain powers that are not ours, 114 and which we could not grasp were they told to us, because we would be obliged to attempt to interpret them into terms of our own understanding, is borne out by the teachings we receive from the Voices. They say, "We can not explain, because you could not understand. To realize these truths, it is necessary that one be in spirit."

Unless we of the flesh were deprived of these higher faculties, 115 or one additional faculty if it is only one, we could not accept the harsh reality of our earth-experiences, and therefore would not profit through being in the flesh.

God is power. Development means getting closer to God— 116 working more in harmony with His Law. And development insures freedom from harm—from fear—from those deterrents that are peculiar to the earth-experiences. As greater power is

gained through broader understanding, then just as that understanding must fill one with more reverence for God, so must the power that it produced by that broader knowledge be a power for good. God is all-goodness, and a closer approach of understanding of His Works, of necessity must put that knowledge into action—not a negative action of evil that would cause one to retreat farther from that understanding and happiness—but a positive goodness that would be productive of still higher development.

117 We think of the angels as good and pure. Why should we not think of them as serious-minded men and women who study diligently, and who accept all their tasks as a great privilege? Why not think of them in terms of naturalness and reason? Why try to believe that, although we of the earth-world struggle very hard to learn just a little, all compensation ceases with death, and knowledge, development and purity are thrust upon those freed from the flesh? If natural law within the scope of our reason and recognition, operates unwaveringly, why should it cease to operate in the same manner in some other part of God's Universe? Why should there cease to be debits and credits in spirit, when they persist in our world? What difference is there between one kind of debt and another kind? Is not a debt of the spirit more real than a monetary debt?

118 For a time—how long we do not profess to know, and the spirit-world does not seek to tell us definitely, except that it is centuries, perhaps—we who pass from earth to spirit, continue with our work, or with some spiritual correlative of our earth-work. This does not imply that, for eternity, the banker will be a banker. It does not mean that there are banks and factories in spirit just like our own. It does mean only this: Banking was the life-work of a man on earth. His earth-experience was banking. Beyond that, he experienced but little. And upon entering spirit, he could best serve others in this world, as a guide, by exercising the powers at his command. He could guide according to his talents. He could not be expected to be a musical guide, or help pass inventions to

those in this world. He would continue his experience according to his talents—until the time would come when the cycle of that special experience had been rounded out. While he was guiding those in our world who have to do with banking, he also would be going to school on his own account, and studying new truths. He would be learning something each day. And this new knowledge, these continued studies, would pertain to the higher truths of Life. As he profited through his guidance of those on earth (some friend, perhaps, or some struggling stranger whom he had never known previously), he would also be gaining a different kind of experience in spirit preparing for further advancement at some future time, or getting ready for another visit to the flesh in a new incarnation.

Is this progress not true also in our own world? A merchant 119 is successful as a merchant, but he may be studying something else. He may have a laboratory fitted up at home, and study chemistry. And upon entering spirit, while he might act as a guide to some merchant on earth, that guidance would require maybe only two or three hours a day. Some of the balance of his time might be devoted to a study of chemistry. Centuries hence, with the benefit of that extensive study of chemistry in spirit, that man could return to the earth and make his mark in the world as a scientist.

Development must be thought of as something that is 120 earned. Constant, faithful study is as necessary for advancement on the spirit-side as it is on this side. God does not shower knowledge on any person, here or there. Everything we possess, must be earned. The process seems slow. Measured by our understanding of time, it is slow. It is also thorough.

That there are studies far beyond our conception of learning, 121 pursued in the spirit-world, in the spheres near us and in those farther removed from the earth-plane, we should admit. We know of many branches of learning. Do we know all of them? We know facts about only a small part of the branches of study with which we claim to be more or less familiar. Let us illustrate this point. These statements will be accepted without question by those familiar with spirit-phenomena;

perhaps they can not be accepted so readily by others: In the seance-room, flowers may be given to those present—flowers that actually had grown in the spirit-world. They were not smuggled into that room. The person not familiar with these things will offer many explanations. Those least familiar with a subject are always ready to place their opinions far above those with specialized knowledge. Ignorance is also arrogance; it is egotism. Every explanation of spirit-phenomena that the novice can advance, was thought of early in the studies of those who understand Spiritualism. But those students, those believers, also thought of many finer truths than the minds of the skeptics could advance. If ten thousand persons offered their opinions on spirit-phenomena, without previous intimate knowledge and experience, they would suggest about the same explanations. Primal thought is in common.

- 122 The ordinary liar lies in the same crude way of other ordinary liars. People think according to their experience and development. Skilled falsification passes beyond ordinary lying, and becomes—diplomacy. The uneducated person passes opinions on those with learning in about the same primal, and necessarily crude, manner. The first thing the self-appointed critic would say about the fact that flowers can be brought into the seance-room, would be, "Somebody smuggled them in."
- 123 If a million different ignorant persons (ignorant as to the truths of spirit) were asked to explain the phenomenon, they would offer the same explanation. Primal minds think in primal ways. The primal mind thinks in terms of suspicion, and scorns all things beyond its understanding.
- 124 On the other hand, the scientist, who claims superior knowledge of "test conditions," and by whom the spirit-world naturally refuses to be bossed, has his explanations. Yet, on subjects pertaining to spirit-phenomena, the scientist has a mind as primal as any one of the million to whom we have made reference.
- 125 The person long familiar with Spiritualism, knows that all possibility of fraud is absent, and knows so for reasons that

even the scientist would not grasp. And the experienced person in such matters, knows other things—facts that the scientist has never even thought about, because his mind has never been educated to think in that direction. We find scientists, great scholars, successful business and professional people who are believers in Spiritualism—who have been for years. All the doubts that the novice can possess, was once theirs. These folk learned Spiritualism—went far beyond anything that the novice could understand, have a higher, clearer perception than others possess, because continued study and experience must be at the foundation of all knowledge. We learn through slow processes—not through having knowledge poured into our brains much as water would be poured into a pitcher. But the most inexperienced are the first to say that those of higher development have not perceived, have not thought about, the simple, primal ideas that flash into the minds of those critics. Is that reasonable? Do we begin acquiring knowledge by calling adepts in that line fools?

There are perhaps many hundred persons in this world who 126 have flowers pressed in books—flowers that bloomed on the spirit-side of life, and that were translated, transmuted into the terms of material. And just as flowers are brought to the seance-room, so are articles taken from the sitters and delivered to them at the most unexpected times—away from the seance-room, away from other persons, in the broad daylight. Let us not say that this can not be so. Let the doubter say that he can not understand it.

The spirit-friends who do these things, call their skill nothing 127 but a higher knowledge of chemistry. Rappings and spirit-lights, they explain as produced through chemical laws; not the chemistry that we know, but the higher knowledge of the science gained in spirit.

We could fill volumes with details of spirit-phenomena. 128 That is not the purpose of this work. We have mentioned these facts only to illustrate one point: If chemistry has a higher or spiritual phase, then so have other subjects with

which we are familiar. And just as earth-experience is important and necessary for purposes we may not comprehend, so is there a broader field of experience in spirit; not simply singing psalms and playing harps, but learning through study and practice.

129 We are told (and we repeat this as a reminder) that all life begins in the flesh; many of those in our world today are enjoying individual life for the first time. We may call this the birth of souls if we wish. The soul is of God—exists with God—but comes into its own individuality here in the flesh. Then, at death, that spirit enters the "world-next-door." But is it not likely that the brief life in the flesh has not been of sufficient duration to permit that spirit to progress to the higher spheres, until the earth-experience is well rounded out, and the spirit is really independent of earth-conditions? With greater truths to be learned in spirit—truths pertaining to our earth-work, as well as to higher subjects—is it not reasonable that experience in spirit should require longer study and practice in order that the spirit may bring back to the flesh more skill, more adaptability to grasp facts in the earth-life?

130 We are told that, when earth-children pass into spirit, they learn more in eighteen months than an earth-child would learn in six or seven years. So it is with adults. The spirit who has been in the spirit-world five hundred years likely has learned more than he ever could learn in the flesh in countless thousands of years. He returns to the flesh, and is noted for his brilliancy, and through his remarkable knowledge and ability, adds substantially to the world's fund of information.

131 We often are told that drunkards and thieves and murderers can not enter the kingdom of heaven. This is true, because when they have developed sufficiently to enter the kingdom of heaven, they are no longer drunkards or thieves or murderers. They pay their debts before they advance. They earn their development. And we have reasons to believe that many whom we called bad in this world, have brilliant minds, and are equipped to study and to learn very rapidly once they enter

spirit. They may make much more rapid progress than the leaden-brained good person, who might have been good in our world because he was too torpid mentally to be anything else. He claimed a distinction for his goodness, when he was never mentally alert sufficiently to realize that a temptation had come his way.

It is not development to not be tempted when we do not feel temptation. It is development, when we feel the lust-call, to overcome it. We know that there are some earth-men and women who are almost fallow sexually. They never felt sexual passion. They claim to be good because they have committed no sexual indiscretions. Are they good, or simply negative? Can the bird with the clipped wings say that it stays at home to be faithful? Wouldn't it try to fly if it had wings?

A man who never feels the tug of ambition, works at his little task and retains his position because he is just capable enough to not be discharged. He goes to church and prays aloud—and says that he is good. But he never did one really good deed in his life. The reason he did nothing bad, was because it was too much effort. That fellow was glad to simply be alive, and did not want to start something which he did not have the moral or physical courage to stop. Has he developed? Is he to be compared with the man who was keenly alive and took chances, and did wrong, and then overcame his evil? Is negative goodness a virtue, or merely proof of inertia?

We do not know that a polliwog ever did anything very wrong, nor can it do much that is good. The best it can achieve through all eternity is becoming a frog. There is no distinction in being a frog. Those persons who do the greatest work on earth, have had the most experience—they have had their faults, and likely grievous faults, too. But they have overcome those mistakes. They have earned their way. Having done wrong, they have compassion for wrong-doers. Having suffered, they have compassion for those who have suffered. But the negatively good person has no compassion,

because he has small experience. Which soul would we turn to if we wished help?

- 135 Development pertains to the earth-life and the spirit-life. There is endless progression in spirit—ages of study and work in the spheres nearest our own. And beyond those spheres, reaches all eternity, with its assurance that there never will come a time when there is not something to learn, when there are no new heights to attain. Can any spirit ever hope to know all? That is beyond reason, because God alone knows all, and no spirit, who is merely an off-shoot of God, a small fraction of the whole, can ever equal the whole.

PART XVII

JUSTICE AND TRUTH

We are warned repeatedly by the spirit-world that no mortal tendency is more deplorable than that of passing judgment on our fellow-beings.

Because mankind does not live in harmony with the truth and knowledge of spirit, it is necessary to have courts of justice, and prisons. It is essential that judges be called upon to decide the punishment of wrong-doers who have been tried by a jury of their peers and found guilty. The processes of man-made law aim to be fair. But even the statutes and their interpretation may sometimes be employed to punish those who do not merit punishment, simply because the facts are unknown—evidence that is purely circumstantial points to the guilt of those who are innocent.

It is part of the law of the world that some of us be judged. Some of us must pay penalties. But it is not part of the law of the world that we should be accused falsely. A rumor is taken up by gossip, and upright characters are sometimes subjected to the most unfair criticism. We do not know even when we have conclusive proof that a person has done wrong, just what the circumstances may have been leading up to that act. Without knowing the conditions, are we in position to judge? Because we are not attracted by the appearance of a person, or perhaps by his habits or peculiarities, does that give us any right to pass judgment on that individual?

We resent any false judgment that is passed upon us. We feel the sting of injustice. Indeed, we are more likely to resent even an honest accusation because it injures our pride. When we have done wrong, we desire to find a logical excuse that will shield us and explain away our actions.

- 5 The mob-spirit is ever-present, ready to maim and kill the person who may be accused of some crime. The mob-spirit is ready to destroy property, to mete out punishment to others—not for any real reason, but because the lust of destruction is the outgrowth of the readiness of mortals to judge.
- 6 Sometimes we can not explain why we do certain things, and at other times we become angry and say something we do not really mean. But we may judge in our thoughts as well as in our deeds. The judgment is wrong even though it may never be expressed. Hatred and jealousy typify some forms of human judgment.
- 7 Any person can criticize. There are a few who can paint masterpieces, but any rowdy can slash them into ribbons with a knife. There is no credit in destroying, and there is no credit in false judgment.
- 8 The Law of Compensation proves to us that eventually we suffer for every unjust opinion and word and deed. For the time being, we work injury and inconvenience upon those whom we judge. We do not stop to think. If we took the time to think, we might curb our thoughts and our tongues.
- 9 But we have a right to correct others. To show another person a mistake that we are very certain is a mistake, is not judgment—unless we do so in a spirit of malice or meanness. It is never injurious to any one to wake him up, to help set him on the right path. Nor is it helping any wrong-doer to forgive him when he never can develop unless he pays the full price for his wrong. He must pay it sometime.
- 10 If we are defrauded out of money or property and are free to forgive those who have wronged us, is that forgiveness of better quality than the demand of restitution? In our dealings with others, we are not necessarily exercising judgment in insisting on that which is right and demanding that which is ours.
- 11 In the newspapers, we read a story of someone who has been arrested, who has been accused of a crime, perhaps, or whose life has been held up to public ridicule. Do we know that the

writers who wrote the story were in possession of the facts? Are we sure that they were not moved by malice or love of sensation? We possess none of the facts. For our own sakes, for our own respect for ourselves, we should be fair enough to admit that we do not know whether the accused is innocent or guilty. We are not going to add our condemnation, because we are not in position to pass judgment. Why should we not seek to cleanse our own vision before we say that we have seen facts pertaining to the lives of others?

We see but little of life. We form misconceptions. We may think at times that our experience has been very broad and varied, when it has been extremely narrow. Unless it has developed us, unless it has given us breadth of vision and understanding, it has been experience of small consequence or else we have refused to accept its lessons.

The spirit-world, with its broader understanding, tells us that no soul has even been condemned—that only lack of harmony with the Law of Life and want of understanding can answer for things that we say are very wrong. When we are attending to our own progress, we have neither the time nor the inclination to scrutinize the lives of others or to pass judgment.

The spirit-world does not judge us or condemn us. If harsh experiences come our way, they are for our own good. We are being ministered to with loving care. Maybe we are being shocked back into the ways of progress. We do not know what experiences lie in store for us. We can not say that the very thing that we have condemned in others may not, at some time, manifest itself in our own lives.

We pretend to be horrified because some one whom we know has wandered from the path of rectitude. Maybe before many years have passed, we shall be in exactly the same position—we shall go through precisely the same experience. A chain of events may bring results that we would claim now to be impossible in our lives. The humiliation which is heaped upon some acquaintance, may some day be our humiliation. The act of some other person which we say is unpardonably im-

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moral, may find us in its meshes before we are done with life's story on earth. We may have years to live, and the spinning of the wheel of fortune, the unending cycles of experience, may take us into strange places and force us to live under unusual conditions.

- 16 Too often, we are creatures of environment. In our weakness, we succumb to harmful influences. And so the others whom we are so ready to condemn today, may be victims of circumstance and may require the humiliation, the pain and the grief that cause fingers of shame to be pointed in their direction.
- 17 Just as we resent being judged falsely, or even honestly, so every one else on earth feels the sting of injustice. If we would attract justice, we must be just. The Law of Attraction, the Law of Compensation, the Law of Life, must mean that unto us will come those things that are ours. If we send out thoughts of injustice, then some day injustice will come back to us. It might find us unprepared to meet it. It may bruise us and crush us.
- 18 Truth is at our command at all times. Truth is another way of saying justice or honesty or progress.
- 19 Time and time again the world has been told the same truth. The truth is not new. It came into being with Creation. God is All-Truth. He can be nothing else or His Great Law would not be consistent. The truth never changes, but mortal conception of the truth often alters, because we are inclined to interpret truth according to our own conceptions.
- 20 Truth alone will make men free. Their theories can not save them, unless in those theories the germ of truth is very potent. Truth will make men just. Truth is a mark of progress. As we move toward harmony with Life's Law, we enter the condition of truth.
- 21 Falsehood belongs to our world and not to spirit. It is a condition of the flesh. It is a wandering from God's law.
- 22 However, human conception of the truth may be brutal and abrupt. We find that many persons are mistaken. Their

mistakes are not designed—they are not the outgrowth of intrigue. These people are simply mistaken. It is not kind to go to these folk and tell them the sudden and blunt truth that will wound them. It is not an act of kindness to go to a mother and tell her about the perfidy of a son or a daughter.

The higher conception of truth never intended that we use it as an instrument of torture. What desire can prompt any person to go to another and reveal a truth that can not possibly help that person? Why go to a happy wife and tell her of the infamy of the husband she loves and trusts? It is the truth, but the shock may prostrate that wife. It may change her life. Would it not be the truth just as much if we were to go to the husband and tell him of our knowledge of his wrongdoing, and warn him that if he did not have strength enough to desist on his own account, measures would be taken to make him desist for the sake of his wife? In that manner, the truth would be served. It would be exercised properly. It would help bring about the same results we had in mind, without causing any heart to bleed.

The man in business may be on the verge of bankruptcy. But he realizes that if his creditors do not press him, if he can have a little more time, he may overcome this burden of debt. It would be perfectly truthful for that man to go to all of his creditors and tell them the precise condition of his business. They probably would bring suit against him. They would close his doors and they perhaps would realize not one-tenth of the money due them. They have acted on the truth, but have they perceived the truth as it is? They can not see what this business man sees. Their fear of loss would blind them to his perception of the way out of his indebtedness.

The world often forms wrong conceptions of truth. If we are so very anxious to tell the truth in its crude, brutal reality, then let us go to our families and confess our own sins. Let us go to the competitor in business and tell him exactly what we are planning against him. Let us begin with ourselves and permit the white light of truth to beat down upon us. But

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do we conceive the truth from that angle? Do we not believe in applying it more to somebody else?

- 26 The business man who has found himself in a financial predicament, may be serving the truth better by exercising his ability to improve his condition and take care of all of his creditors. He is in harmony with the truth, because he is doing what is honest.
- 27 Parents wish to shield their children from harsh experiences, from the clutches of infamy, from the grasp of evil habits. Do they begin by permitting those children to see all of the wickedness of the world? That would be the truth. But perhaps the boys and girls put into sudden contact with all of the allurements of sin, would fail to see the penalties that lie beyond, and would be enamored and attracted by the thrills of wrong-doing.
- 28 If every individual in the world were to start out this morning telling the truth about himself and everybody else of his acquaintance, the world would be in an uproar. No world-war could ever approach in violence and despair the results of that truth-telling.
- 29 One who realizes that he has done as he should not have done, is serving the truth better by overcoming his faults and correcting his wrongs. Then he has put himself back on the path of truth. He has not shocked anybody. He has not caused any additional heartaches. He has not provoked any upheaval, but he has squared accounts quietly and honorably. Have we any right to call that man a liar?
- 30 We live in a world of complications, and sometimes it is kinder by far to withhold the real facts from others. Suppose some banker should publish a statement in the newspapers explaining all of the possibilities of ruin of his institution? It would not be an hour before his depositors began gathering at his bank demanding their money. That banker's business would be ruined. The doors of many commercial houses in that city would be closed. Perhaps hundreds and thousands of persons would be penniless. Hunger and privation in many

homes would grip people who had been happy. That banker knows that the truth would be ruinous. But he serves the truth by correcting his mistakes and by building up the weak spots in his business. It may be a year or two years before his institution is on a basis of solidity and safety. But if he had told the truth, if he had volunteered the truth, he would have caused panic and ruin.

These things are true, because humanity as a whole lives out of harmony with Natural Law. The world is full of accumulations. It is filled with debts of various descriptions. In some degree, every one of the earth's inhabitants is a debtor. But, at the same time, accounts are being paid—wrongs are being righted.

If we look around and about us and consider our fellow-mortals honestly and fairly, we may find that while they have committed wrongs that we have never perpetrated, we have also done wrong things that can not be charged to them. If we believe in truth, then we should begin by being true to ourselves. If we measure up in accordance with our inner knowledge of right and wrong, we shall be true to ourselves and true to all others.

The higher interpretation of truth, as applied to mortals, concerns the development of each one of us. It does not mean going along the highways and byways telling all the facts about ourselves and revealing all of the sinful things that we know about others. That trouble-making interpretation of the truth may give us a sordid thrill. For the moment, we may think that we have come into perfect harmony with God's Law because we have told the truth. Have we gained and has the world gained?

To know the truth is not to become aware of the sins of our fellows. That is like gossip. It does not cause us pain very often to know that some other person has done wrong. We may be selfishly happy in the knowledge that his sins have been revealed and ours remain intact within ourselves. But if we strive to know God's Law and to work in harmony with it,

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then we are living according to the truth—according to the immutable principles of life. And as we get back nearer Natural Law, the necessity of falsehood diminishes.

- 35 If we wish to tell the truth, then let us tell our friends and the world at large about the greater and deeper facts that will help people become better, that will assist them in progressing.
- 36 If a preacher in his pulpit forms his sermon to please his congregation by excusing and explaining away their sins, he may have pandered to their weakness. He has not helped them. If he preaches the gospel and carries to them the truth that the world has known for ages—if he refreshes in their minds knowledge and memory of the things they know are so—then he has served his purpose as a missionary of truth. His sermon may strike straight to the hearts and consciences of many of his congregation.
- 37 But he has not stepped forward on the rostrum and said, "I am going to tell you the truth. Mrs. So-and-So, sitting right over there, is too intimate with another woman's husband. Mr. Blank, over in this seat, spends two or three nights every week in gambling. This other gentleman over here, who appears before us as a paragon of virtue, is cheating widows and orphans out of their legacies."
- 38 Has he served the truth by telling these things? Is it good for any person to suddenly have his secrets revealed, when perhaps the clamor and condemnation that will be raised can only keep him down? Is it not better to permit him to hear the truth—the great truth—so that he may recognize in his heart how far he has wandered from it and awaken within himself a desire to return to the things that are real? Have we helped a person more by openly condemning him or by permitting him to see the great facts of life and progress, and thereby giving him an opportunity of working out the salvation that he must achieve?
- 39 We find that while false ideas may seem to flourish for a time, eventually the truth asserts itself. We discover that false theories melt away in the light of progress, that false

ideals retreat before greater knowledge. Today, there are religions that have millions of followers. But in earlier times, when the progenitors of those religions came before their neighbors and talked the truth, they were stoned to death or thrown into the pit of the amphitheatre as food for ravenous beasts. As humanity has progressed and the history of what has been accomplished is studied by others, and people learn that there are better ways of doing things and more desirable ways of living, what was once a subject of popular condemnation becomes a subject of reverence and inspiration. Thus the world moves forward. Little by little, humanity becomes better, because the ideals of the world are elevated continuously.

We may see a truth without living it, but if it is called to our attention often enough, we may begin to believe it and desire to accept it. We find men and women who are endeavoring to live righteous lives, either as members of a church or without church affiliations, who were once outlaws in the sense that they defied the Law of God and the laws of man. Sometimes they are safer persons to know than those who never have committed any great sin.

If we look around us through eyes of fairness, we will see many persons who are seeking God and endeavoring to learn and live spiritual truth. In them, we find the type of refinement that tells us that they are broad in their views and tolerant, and filled with a desire to be straight-forward and fair in all of their dealings.

Truth-seeking promotes spirituality. Gaining in knowledge of truth may seem to be a very slow process. Sometimes the things that grow quickest also wither and die quickest. Countless generations of weeds will spring up, have their day and die, while the slow-growing oak tree is still a sapling. Many of the greatest cities of the world have been centuries in building, and those that have grown more quickly are simply the result of what people have learned, through their own experience and the cumulative experience of the world.

As people in general learn more about truth and endeavor to live according to it, then it will be easier for those who come

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to the earth to begin their lives in environments of truth and with the inspiration of truth.

- 44 Many of our worst weaknesses are the outgrowths of our lack of courage to defend ourselves against harmful influences. We know that a certain thing is not right, but we pursue it because for the time it seems to be the easiest way. There is no aftermath or reaction to truth. Every act and thought contrary to truth brings its own reaction—its own penalty.
- 45 Very often the most marked progress on earth has been the result of injustice, ridicule, persecution. Christ brought truth to the world and He was crucified, because His fellow-beings were not prepared to hear the truth. It struck home to their hearts with such force that to each of them it seemed like a personal accusation.
- 46 It is easier to absorb and live the truth than it is to live falsehood. A lie is like an ailment. It must be cured. The truth is like health. It brings happiness, freedom from worry and freedom from fear. Being formally good, muttering truths that we do not feel, is of no assistance to us. Only according to the manner in which we live, do we serve ourselves. And only as individuals accept the subject of truth as pertaining to themselves, and not as a source of judging their neighbors, only as they recognize in the truth something that pertains to their own guidance and progress, can they gain an adequate conception of what truth means.

PART XVIII

GOOD AND EVIL

Everything that is placed within the grasp of man may be 1
used for good. The abuse alone injures.

A rich man may be rich in spirituality as well as material 2
possessions. A poor man may be poor in material possessions
and poor spiritually, or the reverse might be true.

No outward signs can determine the subject of good and 3
evil. Indeed, good and evil as they are measured by human
standards, are things that pertain to the flesh. They are the
mortal things. The soul is never evil. It was conceived in the
greatest goodness. It is a reflection of its Creator.

Selfishness, greed, meanness, sin, crime—whatever we may 4
call these negative conditions—are more like ugly gowns.
If people dress poorly, if they are ragged and dirty, it is natural
to assume that they are poverty-stricken and indifferent.
If people are uncleanly about their homes, we say that they
lack pride. But the road of negative conditions is man's
road. It leads only to the knowledge that better things are
more worth-while.

Each of us of the earth comes into the world as a pure baby, 5
free from sin and evil tendencies. We may say that we inherit
sin. But the spirit-world has told us in its teachings of re-
incarnation that each of us is an individual. We may live
in the environments of sin and absorb sinful ideas, but those
things are never the possessions of the soul. Like decay and
death, they belong to the earth-world.

'What we call evil is in reality a matter of habit. We do an 6
evil thing or live evil lives only because we have accumulated
negative conditions. We have accepted error and become

accustomed to it. But error is never natural. Sin is not a natural condition. Even the sinful person who gloats and seems to glory over his wrong-doings, is experiencing no real happiness. Through his vainglorious boastings, he feels fear—he dreads retribution.

- 7 The person who has done wrong shrinks under accusation, and the person who is in the wrong never can fight the way the man in the right can battle. The very knowledge that we are wrong, weakens our position. If a person accuses us falsely, we are indignant. We have the truth to fortify us. But if the accusation against us is based on fact, we feel our weakness—we tremble under it. If a person should tell us of two or three wicked things we have done, we would have no means of knowing how much more of our sin had been revealed to that person. Then our own wrong-doing would come up and accuse us.
- 8 A person may go along committing depredations, doing wrong things, thinking evil thoughts, and imagine that he is succeeding. He may think that he has become so clever, nobody can find him out. His soul has found him out since the beginning. Natural Law found him out from the moment of his first evil act or thought. No matter where he goes or what he does, he is not away from God. The very life-principle within him is of God.
- 9 Sin does not cling to the soul, because the soul is without sin. It is in harmony with God's Law. But the individual does experience the results of wrong-doing and wrong-thinking, and in time must pay all debts contracted through evil or error. When those debts are paid, then the soul has returned to its own normal state of being, and it is as it was before the person sinned.
- 10 If sin clung to any soul throughout eternity, that would be because no means had ever been provided to pay the debt. But the very existence and fact of Natural Law means equalization—it means equity. Natural Law punishes evil-doing only because those wrong acts and thoughts are inharmonious with that law. Paying those debts—giving back goodness of deed and thought to the degree that will balance the account—is

another way of saying that the individual has earned his way back to harmony with God's Law.

Natural Law, in any of its expressions, demands only that it be paid for any infraction. This is equivalent to saying that wrong deeds and thoughts are breaches of the law, and that good can out-balance evil, that every debt ever contracted can be refunded.

The natural and logical process of paying debts, of squaring accounts, places a responsibility upon every person. It removes the necessity or the reason for the forgiveness of sins. It places every person on his own foundation. It makes him profit through his experience. And it proves that goodness and virtue reward themselves because they harmonize with God's Law.

Within each of us is that Godly instinct that tells us the right from the wrong. We feel it, and the more sensitive we are, the more we suffer when we realize that we have wandered from the paths of progress.

But it is quite possible that one may classify sins and virtues much as one might buy ready-made clothing. Some of the things that we think are wrong may not be as evil as we think they are, and those things that we think are good may be just as harmful as an overt sin.

Evil is ignorance. If a person knew nothing about poison, then a poison label on a bottle would not warn that person. Innocently enough he might drink the contents of that bottle. His ignorance would not excuse him. He would be very ill and might die. He might have been told that the bottle contained the sweetest of wine.

And so, when we understand God's Law better, we avoid wrong-doing because we realize its futility. If we understood to the fullest degree of our possible understanding in the flesh just what God's Law signifies, then it would not be necessary for us to pass through these painful experiences of error and sin in order to learn that law. We may be able to learn the truth only by combating it. We have to learn that truth some

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time, and when we really understand it, we are glad to co-operate and harmonize with it, because therein we find happiness.

- 17 Everything that accords with God's Natural Law, is natural —it is normal. Real happiness and health are natural, because they harmonize with God's Law. Unhappiness and sickness are abnormal, because they are infractions of God's Law.
- 18 The person who does wrong is either ignorant or wilful. If he is ignorant, then perhaps he is not in position to understand and must learn through his harsh experience. If he is wilful and commits a wrong deed or thinks a wrong thought, then he must learn that he has harmed himself more than anybody else, and that it is his responsibility to himself that should make him do the right thing.
- 19 Even the evil person, the hardened sinner, as we call him, who believes that he is cheating the laws of God and man, is not only serving the purposes of his own experience, but his very acts of wilful wrong may be utilized in the great Plan to work out some real good. The man who is sent to prison for life really may be an example of the futility of wrong-doing to others who are inclined to be evil. Their first conception of right and wrong may be the basic idea that those who do wrong are likely to suffer. They may turn to right and goodness through fear of the consequences of wrong acts. They still must learn the responsibility of themselves to their Creator. They must realize that love of God and harmony with Natural Law, are logical and normal. But if they begin by avoiding evil because they fear its consequences, they may have placed themselves on the path that will lead to a broader and clearer realization of the truth.
- 20 We may condemn persons who do wrong when they actually do not intend to do wrong, but simply have committed errors through their lack of understanding. They need teaching. They are willing to do what is right, and if they are instructed properly, their natural instincts will lead them into the paths of righteousness.

Sometimes the sorrow and shame of a wrong act really constitute atonement. Maybe the debt can not be paid off only by regret. But sincere repentance at least comprises part of the payment, and in many cases closes the account entirely.

Let us not overlook the truth that there is just so much room in the mortal mind, or brain-capacity, for active thought. The more evil one thinks, the less room one leaves for good. The evil thought becomes a thought-habit that is perhaps even more real and dangerous and harmful than a physical habit.

One may fill one's mind with useless and trivial things, leaving no space for constructive and valuable thoughts. And through crowding out the good and the useful, one may so surcharge one's mind with the needless and the harmful, that the commission of wrong-doing or sin is most certain to result. But whenever an evil thought is crowded out of the mind and a good thought is put there in its place, the tendency to do wrong is overcome and the victory of right over wrong becomes much easier the next time.

Every wrong act is preceded and given being by a wrong thought. Wrong thoughts are earth-accumulations. Through the mortal brain, there seeps the inspiration of the spirit that illuminates the brain. It is not the brain that thinks, but it is the brain-record that we must deal with and through in our earth-experience.

One may refrain from actually committing an evil act through fear of consequences, and therefore may say, "I am free from sin." But the thought may be more tangible than the deed. That individual may be sinful in his thoughts, and may suffer even greater consequences than though he had committed the spontaneous evil acts toward which he had been inclined. In fact, sometimes when an evil thought is given action, the consequences come more rapidly and the individual is brought to an earlier realization of the futility of evil. But the wrong thought that is nursed in secret, and

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that does not have its objective evidence through wrong-doing, is like a subtle poison.

26 Many a person has been turned back from the path of evil because he has given his wrong thoughts action, has been rebuked or punished, and is more careful in the future about how he thinks. We pay for wrong-thinking, just the same as we pay for wrong deeds. We may enter the spirit-world before we actually see where and how and why we were sinful. And perhaps it is not so easy to balance the account from the spirit-side, because we associate those wrong acts with persons who are still on earth. We see them suffer through our wrong. We may see our children suffer because of our evil. And we realize that only back in the flesh—returning to the conditions of the earth-world—can we work out to the satisfaction of our own souls, that restitution that we might call salvation.

27 We say that a person is obsessed, that an evil spirit has taken charge of one's thoughts and actions. That is a silly subterfuge and senseless alibi. People do wrong and think wrong only because they do not fully realize the truth. In spirit, even the most ignorant are in position where they have clearer perception of God's Law, and they are no longer obstructed by the mechanism of the physical body. The thoughts which these spirits think are clear and unhampered. No spirit is evil. And no spirit ever obsessed any mortal, except that mortal's own spirit that was looking through eyes that had become accustomed to seeing only infamy and sin, lust and false gain.

28 Real goodness is constructive goodness. Many of the things that we refer to as good are in reality harmful.

29 We are not helping another person by keeping that individual from the experiences he should have, but we are harming him. If we support an individual who should be out earning his own way and standing on his own feet, thereby making him dependent when he should be independent, do we think that spirit will come back, when we have crossed the bridge of death, and thank us for what we have done? It might surprise us if we were told that such individuals in spirit would come to us and say, "You deprived me of experience I should

have had. If you had permitted me to live my own life, I perhaps would not have to return to the world to gain the experience you withheld from me."

Charity too often takes food and clothing and fuel to the poor and stops there. They consume what has been given to them, and expect more. If charity would help them bridge the temporary embarrassment and suffering, and at the same time assist those people to help themselves, then charity would become a great institution of learning. To relieve suffering and poverty is beautiful. But to leave those who suffer in the same condition of ignorance is wrong.

Helpfulness means helping others to help themselves. We should never remove responsibility from any fellow-being. We can be kind and generous and philanthropic most by showing others how to get onto their own feet and work out their own progress.

Now, if a person knows and appreciates Natural Law, realizes what compensation means, that person may do good with the understanding and purpose of bringing good back unto himself. But even though that is his purpose, it has not detracted from the genuine good that has been accomplished. He will be repaid. He has earned recompense even though he has gone after it purposely.

Why should this not be true? Why should we be expected to only accidentally earn rewards when there is no accident to Natural Law? If we go out to purchase an article and have considerable knowledge about articles of that class, we are showing good judgment by selecting something that represents the fullest value to us. The Law of Compensation means that we must earn our way to progress. And how can we earn it unless we know the nature of that which we buy, as well as the coin with which we do the purchasing?

We say, "So-and-So does good because he expects to be rewarded. That kind of goodness can not help him." But we do not say complainingly, "So-and-So is a careful, experienced buyer and he gets value-received when he spends his money." His buying ability we regard as an acquisition. Why should we deprecate his knowledge of Natural Law?

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Why should we belittle his superior knowledge in earning his way spiritually or even materially?

- 35 It is evidence of ignorance, of course, for a person to make an advertisement of goodness. Such a person can not experience the fullest benefits of those good acts. God always sees what we do. It is not necessary that we tell mankind of our goodness.
- 36 In the world, there are many superficial kinds of goodness—a sort of formal or academic goodness that does not come from the heart. Only as goodness comes from the heart, are its rewards greatest. And, therefore, the man who does good to purposely benefit himself, will reap that benefit. But if his goodness does not come from the heart, he will not be rewarded to the fullest.
- 37 Here is an example: A man may do good through the use of money. He does it as a monetary goodness, expecting that it will come back to him at some time. He will be repaid in money—in the world's goods. When he does goodness from his heart because he loves to do good, then his reward comes to the heart—it is a thing of the spirit.
- 38 Let us not forget this distinction. Let us not overlook the fact that when we deal in one kind of coin, it is that kind of coin that comes back to us. If we lend a man a sack of wheat, we expect that he will pay us the value of that wheat or will return a like amount of wheat. When we do good from the heart, we are benefiting our spirits. When we do good because we realize that Natural Law will pay us back, we may be doing good only for our bodies, for our earth-possessions.
- 39 There are many persons who are happy to think pure thoughts and to speak honest, encouraging words, and who delight in living according to their conceptions of right. There are persons who make a great advertisement about every good thing they do, about every act of theirs that has virtue. They do not make the same acclaim about their evil deeds.

The consideration of good and evil is an essential part of the study of God's Law—of the realization of our own responsibility.

PART XIX

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

It appears to be much easier for the human kind to talk in symbols and slogans and catch-phrases than to argue with reason and judgment, when it comes to the subject of religion.

The printed prayer that is read or memorized, and the stereotyped expressions of profession of faith, apparently simplify the thought of religion and reduce it to a matter of made-to-order convenience. People who accept religion as a question of convenience, or follow it as a habit, fail to see the meaning of religious philosophy or its purpose.

In a religious sense, the world has at least progressed to a point of greater tolerance. There still are many intolerant people of all religious beliefs, doctrines and philosophies. We are more willing than our ancestors were to concede to each man the right to believe as he wishes—to worship God as he sees fit. This is because the world has less sympathy for persecution than it had in times gone by.

Religion, however, has been a matter of superstition altogether too long. It has been filled with symbols and omens, and God has been regarded as a vengeful God. People have said, "God is love" with about as much concern as they would say, "Pass the salt." Secretly, the majority of people have looked upon God through unfriendly eyes. They have pretended one thing and practised another. They have cared for themselves too much, and for others too little. They have professed to believe, but in their hearts they did not particularly concern themselves as to the degree of their belief.

Man has been very willing to follow the leadership of man. Members of various church organizations have talked too much

about the founders or leaders of their churches, and too little about the purpose of religion. We offer this not in condemnation of any church or any religious belief. The various churches and philosophies have helped keep in people's minds, if not in their hearts, some conception of their obligations to their Creator. Every religion that exists certainly came into being through a desire to get nearer to God, and every religion fills the hearts of many persons with ideals and reverence.

6 Inside and outside of church organizations, there are many sincere men and women. Each believes according to his faith, and if his faith has been dictated to him as a matter of convenience or form, it is undoubtedly better that he can still believe and have some faith, even though he may take up his religion when he enters his church and set it down when he leaves that church.

7 While the religions of the world are diversified and many of them seem to be contradictory, they all have their root in the common conception of one Creator. They are based on the belief that there is life after death. Beyond those points, they differ. If religion becomes a sort of smug satisfaction, if it is only a matter of rote and rhythm, if it depends purely upon formal service—then it has degenerated from its purpose, which is to awaken in every heart an ambition to live in accordance with God's wishes.

8 Each religion has its sacred book, and each one of these books has been changed from time to time by persons who believed that an improper interpretation had been given in the original manuscript. Some of these books have been based purely on history and observation, but in these writings have been many inspired parts or chapters. And if inspired writings could have been secured at one time in history, they can be secured at other times. If one has ever lived who had prodigious physical strength, other men will live who have the same degree of strength. Whatever man has done, man can do. Truth does not manifest itself merely for a season and then vanish from the earth. Truth need not be written in books, because it is written in the hearts of mankind.

Excessive religious fervor invariably has expressed itself in persecution of those of different beliefs. Feuds have sprung up between various religious bodies, and religion too often has degenerated into political hypocrisy. Religion has gone into politics and into business, not through instilling in the hearts of men the desire to be right and just, but through giving rise to clannish favoritism.

The spirit-world does not scrutinize the books on our shelves and does not look for our membership cards, entitling us to a place in any religious organization. The unseen world-next-door looks into our hearts and sees us as we are. We may conceal our hearts from men, but we can not conceal them from our Creator—we can not conceal them from those beings in the next higher state of development.

Out of the confusion of religious fury and religious organization, have come many schools of philosophy based upon affirmation and denial. Some human beings find it very difficult to admit that there is any intelligence in the universe greater than theirs. They arrogate unto themselves an importance they do not possess. They claim powers that are quite beyond them. They define, qualify and limit God. They deny the reality of the things of His creation. They explain what God intends to do and what He does not intend to do. No mortal can claim that he has a proper conception of his Creator, when he uses his religious belief for the purpose of judging and condemning his fellow-beings.

Spiritualism sees in all religions the beauty and the purpose back of those doctrines. The spirit-world prohibits the Spiritualist from seeking to turn any man from his faith. Spiritualism is at least one religion that admits freely that no one is condemned by refusing to believe in the tenets of the Spiritualistic faith. In Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Agnostic, Atheist, the Spiritualist sees only a child of God, who will be rewarded not according to his professions, but according to his conformity with God's Law, and who will not be condemned because he does not agree with any other code of faith.

- 13 Despite the hypocrisy and pretense that we find in different churches and temples, let us also be broad enough to admit that we likewise find sincerity. It makes no difference what church one may belong to, or not belong to; that does not rob that individual of his or her rights in God's Plan. It makes absolutely no difference so far as the ultimate is concerned. People are not rewarded or punished according to their religious professions, but in harmony with their obedience or disobedience of Natural Law.
- 14 It is probably a surprise to many priests and ministers of the gospel, upon entering the spirit-world, to discover that everything is natural and that there is work to do. It may be a painful surprise to many of the world's greatest to learn, upon entering spirit, that they are not great, and that their position is determined not by a court—not by a jury and a judge—but in accordance with God's Law.
- 15 Within the boundaries of the Spiritualistic faith we also find bigots, we find the intolerant, we find zealots. When Spiritualists congregate as church organizations, with their temples and houses of worship, is it not logical that they would soon follow the trend of human habit and be just about the same as any other church?
- 16 The spirit-world desires that Spiritualism be free from churches and temples. It is a religion of the heart and the home, and only as people accept a conception of their duties as applying to themselves at all times, and in all places, can they really lay claim to having a religious turn of mind or religious ideas.
- 17 If a person accepts Spiritualism because some famous man or woman professes faith in it, that is no more religion than becoming a member of a political party would be. If a Spiritualist lives what he believes, he is endeavoring at all times to work in harmony with God's Law. He is not forcing his belief upon anybody else. He understands that force is contrary to faith.
- 18 In the compilation and writing of this volume, we are guided by the instructions that, when we have placed before the world

the information we are prepared to give to people, we have gone as far as we have any right to go. In advertising our books and our work, we are not seeking converts. We are merely endeavoring to find those who are interested in Spiritualism, and who wish to know Spiritualism as it really is.

But if any member of any other religious body—if any priest or minister of the gospel—should read these words, we wish to make our message very clear. It is this: You are doing your work in accordance with your belief. That belief is based upon the same fundamentals that are back of Spiritualism, and every other religious faith and philosophy. It is immaterial, so far as your destiny is concerned, what you believe. If your faith fills your heart, then perhaps that faith is reaching you better than we could reach you. You are not worshiping a different God, but the same God. We have simply placed before you in this volume the Teachings that we received through communication, through voices as clear and plain as yours, voices that are heard by everybody present. The Teachings come from those who live under conditions different from our own. Every teacher who comes to us in the seance-room was once a mortal, and each one of us in the flesh will some day be in spirit. Most of us have been in spirit before. If you believe that those on the other side are capable of understanding their conditions of life better than we could understand them, then you have found in this book much that must interest you. But we do not ask you to turn from your faith or desert your creed. We have no pastorate to offer any one.

We believe that a religion must exist in the heart, and that it will be in the heart no matter where one may travel, without respect to the work one may do, and that this truth applies to all of God's children without regard to nationality or color.

We know that there are many Spiritualists who are not attempting to live as they believe, and we realize that there are many who are so engrossed in an observation of the phenomena of Spiritualism, that their conception of the truth is confined to demonstrations of spirit communication and manifestations.

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- 22 You will find many so-style investigators who will tell you that they have made a careful study of Spiritualism all their lives. They have gone from one seance-room to another. They have scattered their forces. They have demanded each time that their spirit-friends come through new and strange conditions. These people have only a confused idea of Spiritualism. They have sought the phenomena, but they have not cared at all about the philosophy. They have not been seeking the Teachings. They have been like children who go from one playhouse to another, always in search of new entertainment. They are not Spiritualists. All of their conversation is based on the demonstrations they have observed. They are miracle-hunters. They do not represent, but they misrepresent, Spiritualism. The world in general shuns them because they have all of the old passions and intolerance of zealots. They do not talk about the Law of Life. Most of them are unfamiliar with the Teachings. They have communicated with their personal friends on the spirit-side of life, and for the most part they have gone to mediums of small development, who could not possibly attract the higher forces—the more developed individuals on the other side.
- 23 A convert to a religious faith is one thing, and a believer is another. There are many converts who accept a religious code or belief with about the same enthusiasm that a person would experience in being thrown into a vat of very cold water. They do not feel natural in their new environments. Their first impulse is to escape, and mentally and spiritually they do escape, even though they may still pretend to adhere to the belief they have accepted.
- 24 There are many religions in the world, because there are many types of persons and each type must be appealed to. There are many interpretations of the same truth. There are numerous ways in which one fact may be stated. The salesman understands this principle. He realizes that he can say the same thing in a variety of ways, and maybe just one of his statements will make the sale. Minds are appealed to according to their experience and development.

The materialist defines religion as sentimentality—as hysteria. The materialist finds moments when he views the grave as a rather dismal prospect. His own philosophy does not delight him at all times. 25

The atheist combats everything religious and styles religion as superstition. The atheist does his good in the world. He pulls many weeds out of the garden. He sometimes shocks people back into wondering the why and the wherefore of their confessed faith. 26

Despite the many contradictions and the many controversies that have existed since history was first written and since man first claimed religious faith, there still abides in the hearts of people a secret knowledge that God is a great reality. The Godly instincts within every individual may be relied upon when it comes to a decision affecting oneself—one's soul. 27

The religions that appeal most to the heart, become the most deeply rooted. Those that are fashioned to appeal to the mind may be in great favor for a time, but when real grief comes—when the heart is touched—their strength diminishes. 28

If it pleases a person to regard any religious subject with upturned eyes and a long face—if one's conception of God is a fear-inspiring God—then we question that the religion is genuine or that the heart has been touched. 29

Fortunately, there is no evidence that God has called upon any mortal to help operate the universe; consequently, the universe continues in good order without mishap or disaster. 30

There are too many people wondering why God has not done certain things and has done others. Even those who profess religious faith, very often wonder why God makes them suffer. They do not realize that their own ignorance is the cause of their suffering. They ask why God has taken a dear one from them. They do not realize or appreciate the truth that God simply has called the dear one home. They question God and His ways, which is quite the opposite of what a religion should be. 31

- 32 The truly religious person asks God to help him, if it is in accordance with God's will. "Thy Will be done" is a prayer that recognizes the omnipotence and omniscience of God. And any religion that is accepted by a person necessarily must impose a personal responsibility upon that individual. If we believe in God, then we admit that God gave us a certain responsibility—that He placed dependability in us—and that the least we can do is to try to be dependable.

PART XX

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION

Many persons firmly believe that the subject of Immortality and the truth of Spiritualism, must repose with the scientists. They think that chemistry and botany and physics, and the other scientific branches, peculiarly adapt a person to pass an opinion upon God.

The very fact that there are still new scientific discoveries, that occasionally truths about Nature and Natural Law are learned that go beyond what was known before—must at least indicate that scientists have not as yet learned all there is to learn in the universe. Consequently, the profound declarations of some scientists that life is only chemical reaction, becomes a sad commentary on the human intellect. Science does not seem to be thankful for the privilege of inducting into the world a few scattered fragments of knowledge, but immediately feels called upon to deliver an opinion regarding God.

The scientist works in a laboratory. He deals with formulas and equations and logarithms. He seeks to prove or disprove God by geometry and trigonometry and other means at his command, forgetting perhaps that these are very insignificant things in the entire plan of creation.

Scientists have observed some of the operations of Natural Law, but no scientist ever lived who could tell exactly what that law is. Not one of them knows what takes place and why. Science has encountered more than one paradox in its investigations.

The spirit-world does not deny the importance of science, and why should it? Every scientific truth that the world has been ready to receive, has been delivered to the earth-world

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through the instrumentality of a scientist, and that truth has come from the spirit-world.

- 6 Science has not discovered why it would be possible for discarnate beings to be around and about us, because we can not see them or hear them or weigh them or restrict them with any of our interpretations of Natural Law. Science never has been able to manufacture a kernel of wheat. Science never has been able to put the life-principle into any materials. Science never has created any of the things with which it deals. It simply makes combinations of what already is in existence, and performs these minor experiments in the laboratory of Nature with an importance that is very likely amusing to those who can view life's mistakes through the clear eyes of spirit-existence.
- 7 When a scientist seeks to delve into Spiritualism, he concerns himself wholly with the phenomena. If one wishes to be hopelessly confused, then let one peruse the records of the Society for Psychical Research. Let one read works on Spiritualism and psychic phenomena from the pens of scientists, and one will encounter the most profound blunders in the world.
- 8 These scientists exact what they call "test conditions," which is another way of saying that they make a law for the spirit-world. As inferior beings—as the most inferior in God's universe—they attempt to dictate terms for superior beings—those in spirit. Many mediums have submitted graciously to these tests. But so long as the investigations were held under these tests, is there any record that the scientist has received any real teachings from the spirit-world? Seeking evidence, naming tests, making a laboratory of the seance-room, are all equivalent to skepticism and an assumption of mortal superiority.
- 9 There are many scientists in the world who are Spiritualists. Some of these have been obliged to admit that they have encountered something they could not explain. But others have turned to Spiritualism because their hearts were touched, because their cold, hard rules of logic could no longer satisfy

them. They have sought communication no longer as doctors of philosophy, or as engineers, or as professors of colleges, but because they wanted to know that those whom they had loved in the flesh are just as real, just as sentient and just as loving as they were on earth. And these scientists who have turned to Spiritualism in the right way, came to a realization that their knowledge of Nature had been very restricted, and that, after all, they were servants of God—instruments of the spirit-world—privileged to bring to the earth information that the world was ready to receive. They have been doing God's work—they have been fulfilling their missions—they have been operating under orders from the spirit-world—but they have not been isolated, segregated, independent beings who went their way in spite of God and Nature.

The spirit-world refuses to be commanded by mortals. The employer refuses to be dictated to by his employes. The master will be kind to his servant, but he will not permit his servant to rule his household.

The scientist deals with the coarser materials and the natural forces that govern those materials. The scientist has been obliged to admit that there is evidence of something finer in the universe, that does not seem to be amenable to the analyses that are applied to the things we see and claim to know.

When education on this earth has reached its very ultimate—when mortal man has finally come into an understanding as great as his physical organism will permit—then the sum-total of his learning will still be lower than that of the spirit-plane next higher than this world. Beyond these spirit-spheres are higher spheres into which men and women in spirit have earned their way. The world is far from the possession of this ultimate possible knowledge. Nobody in the flesh possesses the learning that is the common property of those in spirit, who are in closer harmony with God's Law, and who realize and appreciate the existence and reality of the finer forces and finer materials, while at the same time recognizing and understanding the gross forces and coarse materials with which we are partly familiar.

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- 13 It is not the place of the pupil to instruct the teacher. The investigator gets nowhere. The investigator goes to different mediums, and each time he expects his spirit-friends to come to him clearly and sharply. Each time those friends are obliged to use new forces, because the force of each medium differs in degree, intensity and kind exactly as the workmanship of each workman differs. Consequently, the professional investigator never progresses beyond a beginning. He never helps produce a condition of harmony that will permit him to receive evidence of the higher intelligence, and the instructions that come from the spirit-side where conditions are harmonious.
- 14 If a family were moving continuously into new homes, then no house would seem like home. These people always would be struggling to become familiar with their environments.
- 15 It is indeed marvelous that the spirit-world can communicate with the mortal-world at all. Of all boons to humanity, the truth of communication is the greatest. The believer who does not question, who does not demand a test, receives continuously more convincing tests than any scientist in the world has ever received. But these tests come not at the command of a mortal, but only when he least expects them.
- 16 We who are familiar with our seance-room, who have communicated hundreds of times with the spirit-world, are given tests that astound us. Nothing in the annals of the Society for Psychical Research can approach the importance of these truths that come to us as a matter of course. We contend that no scientist in the world has the right to come to us with the effrontery that we do not know the nature of these communications. We are told things that have happened in the past. We are told of conversations that occurred far away from the seance-room. We are told about facts that we could not possibly perceive with our mortal eyes. We are guided and advised. We are healed of many ills. And all of these things have become part of our lives, and any one of us can get right down to facts far more convincing than the heavy documentary analysis prepared by any scientist.

Too many persons go to the seance-room to have their theories verified, and if the information coming from the spirit-world does not coincide with these theories, the investigator decides that the spirit-world is wrong and that he is right.

The earth-world folk talk a great deal about psychology and understand little about it. People talk about telepathy, hypnosis, the subliminal self, the subconscious mind, reflexes and a thousand other things that become mere mouthings. Theory after theory is advanced.

The investigator says, "Why does the spirit-world not bring evidence of having knowledge greater than that of men?" The Teachings of the spirit-world that are embodied in this volume, are offered to thinking people as a specimen of what comes through in communication, and we invite any person to check up on the validity of these instructions, through observations extending over a term of years, because the Law of Life is God's Law—it is the only law of the universe—and consequently it works out, it operates faithfully, without infractions, without cessation.

The most skilled physicians in the world never have been able to keep in the flesh any individual whose time has come to pass into spirit. When a great man is ill, the famous doctors of the land flock about his bedside and hold consultations. They publish bulletins. They subject him to various learned treatments. The final bulletin mentions the hour and minute of his passing, after which come the obituary notices and the funeral. That man's clock of destiny had struck the hour of his going, and all the doctors and rulers of the world could not keep him in the flesh. But science is satisfied that the man was treated in a very learned way. Everything that could be done, was done.

Death and birth keep on without consulting the investigator. God's truth exists irrespective of the endorsements of mortals.

At the same time, let us remember that science is not harming the world. Science is necessary in the material progress of man. It is part of God's work, and every scientist is laboring in God's laboratory.

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- 23 Let any scientist who claims the right to pass judgment on Spiritualism, explain why some of the most helpful scientific discoveries have come through what might be termed accident, and why the balance of them usually have come as inspirations. The scientist starts out to discover a fact by elimination, and the very labor of elimination is probably necessary to bring about the conception of the truth. Many scientific discoveries, like many inventions and musical compositions, have flashed into the brains of those who conceived them, and could not be reduced to words for even hours or days. They came as concrete, complete ideas, like an illumination.
- 24 If science could tell us why we think and could explain the nature of thought, then we might concede the right of science to become profound in its judgment of the spirit-world. The conception that the most learned man of science has of God, is perhaps very inferior in comparison with the conception that some poor woman on a side-street has of her Maker. She consults her heart, and in her heart is the truth.
- 25 But the attitude of the scientist causes neither scorn nor condemnation on the spirit-side of life. The spirit-world is tolerant and regards every scientist as a necessity, but only in the same measure as every individual in this world is a necessity—to himself more than to God.
- 26 Science is very often too close to itself. It takes itself too seriously. It is a mark of both arrogance and ignorance to speak of God in terms of common familiarity.
- 27 Dealing with material things, the scientist naturally may become a materialist. Education is no sign of spirituality. No materialist ever offered a reasonable explanation of the spiritual side of things, because his purpose is to build up a bulwark to prove there is no spiritual side. But no materialist has ever been able to snuff out the light of religious conviction in the hearts of people.
- 28 It has been said that science wages a relentless war against religion. But any observer will learn that when death enters a home, there is a longing in the hearts of people that can not

be satisfied by the explanation of any mathematical problem. The mother who has lost her baby, is in no frame of mind to have a scientist come to her and advance any materialistic hypothesis. She is not inclined to forget the call of her heart in favor of some man-made formula. And the scientist, who has been a materialist in every sense of the word, finds only cold consolation in his philosophy when death has taken from him someone he loves. Many a hard-headed, self-important scientist has discovered in his hour of grief, that in his heart there was knowledge that he could never gain in books.

No prescription has ever been written that would assuage the pain of parting from loved ones. No hypothesis, no theory, no dogma of science has ever brought balm to the heart bowed down in sorrow. 29

Communication has brought to the world direct evidence that does not depend upon scientific opinion. The spirit-world tells us that science is not going to prove or disprove the truth of Spiritualism, any more than it is going to create or put out of existence the principle of life. 30

PART XXI

PRAYER

- 1 Prayer is a desire for help sent out from the heart. Only as the heart prays, will a prayer be answered.
- 2 To learn forms that are supposed to be supplications to God, and to repeat them much as one would recite a poem, has nothing to do with prayer. The person who cries out in pain, "God help me," has sent a prayer straight to his Maker, and that prayer is heard and answered by God's messengers, who are our spirit-guides.
- 3 Why should any mortal ask God to do that which may not be God's will? How can any individual claim faith in his Creator if he complains because, after asking God to spare the mortal life of some dear one, that loved one is called home? The time had come for the departing of that soul, and it was returning not to a state of chaos—not to oblivion—but home. That spirit was going not into a strange country, but into more beautiful environments—into a part of God's great world that is free from pain and illness and age.
- 4 We may pray fervently for the things that are contrary to God's will. We may pray for selfish aims. But only when we pray to be shown the light, to be guided—when we pray for the power to realize that whatever is, is best—do we more closely approach a knowledge of our relationship to God.
- 5 When a man is seeking mercy at the hands of some mortal, does he draw a book from his pocket and read a supplication for mercy? Every word he speaks, comes from his heart. When he begs for an opportunity to redeem himself in the eyes of fellow-mortals, does he come with a written speech.? The words he utters express the passion that he feels. When we

are brought face-to-face with great danger and great uncertainty, do we pause to go to our library to find a book of prayers, or do we throw ourselves on God's mercy?

We sometimes pray for rain, for sunshine. We pray that the mortal existence of others may be prolonged. We pray for the things that perhaps would be worse for us. But do we ever say, "Show me the way—teach me—help me to understand"?

If we ask much, why should we not give just a little? Why should we go to God in cold formality? Why should we feel that habitual prayer, that loud, publicly-spoken prayer, will put us in a state of harmony with Almighty God?

Prayer that is perhaps scarcely fashioned into words—the supplication that comes from the heart when we are alone—is the prayer that the spirit-world hears. That prayer is like a magnetic current that brings our loved ones in spirit to us, through God's Law of Attraction. And when we pray, we open the doors. We create the conditions that will help our spirit-friends to assist us.

But some of our most fervent prayers are not in the form of supplications. Work well done is a prayer. Accepting one's duty with a cheerful heart and facing life's problems without complaint, is a prayer.

Sometimes men say that they are too proud and too independent to ask for help. They are like the swimmer who is seized with cramps and will not raise his voice and ask for assistance. But we learn in time that we are not so independent as we believe. We learn our great dependence upon God's higher forces.

God's ways are not man's ways. In time, we shall find that our severest hardships, our deepest sorrows, were working for our ultimate good.

The spirit-world gives us no prayers to memorize and repeat—gives us no formal supplications. Our spirit-friends tell us that when our hearts call, we have prayed—that prayer is the

voice of the soul itself, and not the mutterings that come from the lips of mortals.

- 13 The Spiritualist asks God to keep him close to his guides—to show him the light and show him the way. The Spiritualist thanks God not only for every blessing, but for every reverse, because in that reverse there is some great lesson and out of it must come some lasting good.
- 14 Ofttimes, when our prayers are answered, the answer does not come immediately. It apparently may be delayed. That answer will come in its own good time and in its own good way; and if our faith is constant in the meanwhile, we shall find the answer some day.
- 15 But if we pray and make no effort ourselves, we have only closed the door again. Our prayer has opened the door, but our indifference and indolence have closed it. We might pray unremittingly for years for success, and sit idly in our chairs, and success will never come. Only as we put forth the effort—only as we do our part to the fullest extent of our ability—do we pray in earnest. We must strive and we must struggle. We must do everything that we can do.
- 16 If we regard prayer as a shifting of responsibility, then we have forgotten that our purpose on earth is experience and development. We are here to grow, and, like the flower-garden, we may grow best when it storms. If we had all sunshine and all success, we would sink into a state of degradation. If we have only the material blessings, we may easily fall into the habit of worshiping at the shrine of material things.
- 17 We send out prayers many times for things we should not have, but too often we pray without striving to help bring about the results we desire. When any mortal, in his narrow way, places blame upon God, how can he expect any prayer to find an answer? Earnestness in our hearts—a silent, purposeful desire to do everything we can—will make our prayers real and fruitful.
- 18 Perhaps the spirit-world is testing us in our hours of distress. Perhaps the series of events that will carry us to our knees,

has been planned to bring strength to us. And maybe in our days of prosperity, when we forget our dependence upon God, these sorrows and reverses will strike, because never once in those prosperous eras have we thanked God, or have we sought to put to the best use our measure of success.

Let us pray from the heart, and always with the understanding that God's will is part of it; and if we do not see or understand His will, then whatever answer may come to our prayers, is for the best.

PART XXII

SPIRIT HEALING

- 1 Sickness signifies the breaking of Natural Law.
- 2 Living in closer harmony with Natural Law, those on the spirit-side of life are never ill. They are never old. They are always youthful. They have bodies that are made of finer materials, just as our bodies are made of the coarse materials.
- 3 Even when one is thoroughly convinced of the truths of Spiritualism, one will be ill just the same if Natural Law is disobeyed. Ignorance of that law excuses no one. We may not have known that we were courting sickness and pain. When we are running contrary to Natural Law, the sickness and the pain come not as punishment, but as a logical result of our disobedience.
- 4 We say that we love God. We say that we have deep religious convictions. For all that we are sick. Sometimes our ills are physical and sometimes they are mental. Sometimes they are real and at other times they are imaginary.
- 5 We know that if we are uncleanly about our bodies, and careless about our diet, and indifferent about our periods of rest, we are breaking down the physical structures of our bodies. And if we fill our minds with poisonous thoughts of jealousy and hatred—if we are always in a turmoil against men and life—then we are poisoning our bodies. But if we have within us beautiful thoughts and adhere honestly to ideals of fairness and really view life as we should, we are doing what no physician ever could do for us. But if we accept any theory about the superiority of the human intellect—if we think that we can break the laws of Nature with impunity—we should not be surprised if illness finally catches up with us.

Affirming that we are well, and denying the possibility of sickness, may help to a considerable degree. It may remove from our minds the fog of imagination that has obsessed us. Whenever any person has accepted as his creed the affirmation that God is Love and that God never created a sick man, that person is placing himself in closer harmony with God's Law and is less likely to be ill. Such a belief is infinitely better than any weak submission to a great variety of nostrums, the merit of which no man understands. There is no question that more persons have drugged themselves into sickness than have been relieved of illness by the use of drugs. But, on the other hand, if a person accepts this status of affirmation as paramount and totally ignores Natural Law, then the affirmation does no good.

Whenever God sends us healing help, He sends it through His messengers of the spirit-world. The person who believes that God created man to be healthy and free from pain, is in reality opening the door for the spirit-world to use the higher and better forces that actually will heal the body that is sick.

Men and women who have been physicians in this world, usually continue with their healing practice when they reach spirit. They do not use medicines, but they use natural forces.

We have in our records countless cases of marvelous healing that have been performed by the physicians on the spirit-side of life. And the spirit-world tells us that the magnetic healing and the miracles of "the laying on of hands" are nothing more than a form of mediumship, that has permitted the physicians in spirit to bring their healing forces to benefit those who were being treated.

The spirit-world comes with no denial of the reality of material. The spirit-world recognizes the fact that material-bodies may get out of order to such a degree that disease does result. They do not call that disease an error of thought. They do not typify it as simply an idea. They refer to it as a natural consequence of the breaking of God's Law.

If mortals, through ignorance or indifference, can run so contrary to Natural Law as to get into a diseased condition,

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then is it reasonable that any state of mind could suddenly make them well while still disregarding Natural Law? That would be equivalent to the forgiveness of sins. If we can do anything and be forgiven, where is the Law of Compensation?

- 12 The spirit-world can bring us many healing forces, but if we do not work in harmony with Natural Law—if we do not put forth the right effort to get well and stay well—perhaps we are asking too much of the spirit-world when we seek to be healed. Through the mediumship of many physicians and many healers in this world, those in spirit who specialize in the art of healing are able to operate successfully. The spirit-world is always glad of an opportunity to bring its healing powers to suffering humanity, but wishes above all else to teach mortals that if they will live in harmony with God's Law, they need not be sick.
- 13 The mere profession of faith in Spiritualism is not sufficient to insure healing when one is sick. If a person persists in doing the things that cause illness, in being careless and indifferent, then of what avail is an insistent call for help?
- 14 When we call upon our guides—when we ask the spirit-world to assist us in getting back to health—we open the doors and that assistance will come. It may not put us suddenly upon our feet after days of suffering. It does not necessarily make us robust after we have been ill. But the help is there just the same, and that help puts us in harmony with Natural Law. We get back to where we belong.
- 15 Faith has done more healing in the world than medicine. The greater the faith, the more certain the healing.

PART XXIII

PROPHECY AND MIRACLES

Spiritualism unfortunately has been associated in the public mind too long a time with fortune-telling. The conception that many persons have had of spirit communication is to learn about whom they will marry, about whether they will succeed or fail, and about the great mysteries that are still to be unfolded to us. Fortune-telling has no more to do with Spiritualism than it would have to do with merchandising.

If we were to be told the hour and manner of our passing—if we were to know all of the things that lie in store for us—would we put forth our best efforts? Perhaps the very purpose of a man's lifework will have its full blossom in the last month or week of his earth-existence. If he has been told the time of his departing, is he not human enough to have that knowledge incapacitate him for his duties?

There come to the seance-room many persons who seek information about the possible time of death of some enemy. There are girls who come to mediums wanting to know if some man's wife won't conveniently pass out in the near future so they can marry the husband. This is not Spiritualism. Is is simply evidence of a very damnable earth-condition.

There are some individuals in the spirit-world who undoubtedly have the gift of prophecy. But prophecy is a dangerous thing for mortals. Even granting that our spirit-friends could probably tell us a great deal about what is to occur, we question that it would benefit us. To communicate with our loved ones in spirit and to receive the Teachings that come from the spirit-world, should comprise a blessing that we should be everlasting-ly thankful for.

- 5 The fortune-teller has been very closely linked with Spiritualism, and through that inferior association in the minds of people, Spiritualism has been frowned upon. But Spiritualism is not responsible for fortune-telling and its purpose is not prophecy.
- 6 Whenever a war occurs, there are many so-called mediums who are ready to tell the date and manner of its ending. But we who have been in most intimate contact with Spiritualism in its purest form, have never heard any such prophecy. We have never had any indication that the spirit-world in any manner will interfere with the affairs of this world. The spirit-world does not try to break the laws of this world, but endeavors to help mortals strive for what is right.
- 7 Spiritualism is not an anarchistic belief. It does not tear down, but it builds up.
- 8 The subject of miracles is closely associated with the subject of prophecy. While we must admit that if there have ever been prophets, there will be other prophets; and if there have ever been miracles, there will be other miracles—let us bear in mind that what the world needs most is not the prophecy or the miracle.
- 9 We have had many remarkable demonstrations of what spirit-forces can do in dealing with our materials. We do not profess to understand how these things are done. But we do know that we must not confuse them with the Teachings that come from spirit. We do not doubt that many times the thoughts and actions of people are controlled so as to prevent disaster, because we know that spirit-guidance has no limitations when it comes to helping those in the earth-world.
- 10 If we bring the conditions of miracles, we shall have miracles in return. How many of us in life ever bring the condition of miracles? We do not need miracles, but we do need a deeper reverence of God and a firmer purpose to help us work out our own progress.

Prophecy and miracles seem to typify the mystery of Spiritualism, and too many of those who have attended seances think more about the demonstrations—the phenomena—than the beauty of the messages they receive. They think too much about seeing miracles performed than about working out their own spiritual growth.

PART XXIV

RESPONSIBILITY AND PATIENCE

- 1 In studying the lessons that are given to us from the spirit-world, we must be impressed above all else with two important facts: The first of these is the patience of those in spirit. No matter how many times we wander from the paths of right and neglect our duties, though we go to the ends of the earth, when we ask our spirit-friends to help, they are there, ready, willing, pleased to assist us. And the second point that we must recognize is our own responsibility. We can not escape that responsibility. Only as we work out our own progress, can we grow.
- 2 We forget that our work is a spiritual work—that our world is a spiritual world—that we as spirits are merely animating these earth-bodies, which become nothing more than the instruments that put us in touch with material conditions. When we sleep at our posts, when we refuse to do our duty, when we become impatient and cry out against the treatment we are receiving, we are wandering farther away from the assistance that we should seek. Why permit our souls to sleep when our souls are ourselves? Why regard as an irksome, disagreeable duty the work that God sent us here to perform?
- 3 We came through God's will. We are here because God decreed that we should be here. The work we are doing is the work we should do. We may not have found ourselves—we may not have discovered our missions in life, if we really have missions. Perhaps many of us are without missions. We have enough to do to attend only to our own progress. We are not doing a world-work, but at the same time we are discharging our obligations by doing whatever task God has set us to.

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How many millions of years were required in the creation of the universe, we do not profess to know. But it is evident that in God's Plan, we formed an essential part from the beginning. It is inconceivable that God could expect any of His children to do anything but that which would lead to their ultimate good.

We may be impatient. We may expect to be made exceptions of and promoted beyond the measure of our earnings. We may complain about our stations in life, forgetting that at the longest we are here but for a brief period. Are we going to feel pleased to get back to the other side with the knowledge that we have been untrue to our tasks? Are we going to make it imperative that we come here again and again and again, in order to learn the simple truths that we have the ability to learn and put into practice now?

God will pay us in accordance with our earnings, and we must pay in harmony with our debts. Obligations and rewards are measured more accurately than we ever measure our monetary profits in this world.

We are responsible to God and ourselves. We can not escape that responsibility. There is no time when we are out of range of God's vision. There is no moment, day or night, when He does not know what we do or think. He has provided us with all of the means of success and progress, with the conditions we require for our spiritual development. The messages brought through to us from the spirit-side tell us repeatedly of these responsibilities and of these opportunities.

But we must make an effort, or we can not possess. We must help ourselves to go forward, because eternity never ends, and irrespective of how high we climb on the ladder of the soul's achievement, we shall still find duty—we shall have work to do. When we perform our duties with glad hearts, those duties become pleasures—they are privileges.

No one in spirit ever complains about the task God has placed before him to do. Every spirit is delighted that he or she may play some small part at least in God's great world. That is

development. And the development that we gain in this material-world is vitally important to the degree and speed of our progress when we enter spirit.

- 10 We must learn not to shift responsibility—not to seek alibis—but to look at our own records and admit, at least to ourselves, that we were wrong. We must come to a fruitful realization that in our own hands belongs the work of our own achievement, and unless we do this, what have we gained?
- 11 When we accept our responsibility, when we realize that we must be patient and must labor cheerfully, when we see that our vision is restricted and that many of the things we call painful are for our own good, then we are getting back to the path that is built unerringly along the course of the Law of Life.
- 12 We are here as children of God. We are spirits now as much as we shall ever be. And upon us devolves some of the duty of carrying on God's Work in God's World.

(The End)

SUBJECT INDEX

Following are the alphabetical classifications of the subjects contained in "God's World," Vol. 1. The first numeral given refers to the paragraph number; the second numeral is the page number. Thus, 17-148 signifies Paragraph 17 to be found on Page 148. Should the paragraph be a long one and continue on Page 149, then any subject in Paragraph 17 actually printed on Page 149 would be indexed: 17-149. Semicolons separate groups of paragraph and page numbers; hyphens separate individual paragraph and page numbers.

Where a subject has numerous divisions, it is printed as a single paragraph in this index, and in it will be found an alphabetical listing of the subdivisions of that subject. For example, Experience introduces many subdivisions, and the word, Experience, or its meaning, relates to every subdivision under that caption.

In many instances, a subject will be found referred to in various parts of this volume. Where this is the case, the several paragraph and page numbers are grouped immediately following that subject in the index.

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